

ONGAKU TAKU

The Magazine of Japanese Independent Music

Issue No. 1, Winter 94/95

\$3.50

INTERVIEWS

- Der Eisenrost
- Omoide Hatoba
- Seed Mouth
- K2
- Children Coup d'Etat

LABEL PROFILES

↓
Alchemy Records
Monellaphone Cassettes

Tons of Record Reviews
Live show Reviews
Video & Magazine Reviews

Japan Tour Diary



音楽と音

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INTRO

Greetings

Welcome to the first issue of *Ongaku Otaku*, the magazine for and about independent Japanese music. *Ongaku Otaku*, for those of you not comfortable with the Japanese language, loosely translates to "music fanatic."

The goal of this magazine, if it has one, is to help introduce more people to the music which is going on in Japan, plain and simple. I've been involved with Japanese bands for quite a few years now, and recently I've noted a growing interest here in the U.S. and elsewhere outside Japan. However, this interest has been, not surprisingly, rather lopsided and has ended up giving many people a rather simplistic view about what's happening in Japan. Frankly, if I read one more article describing the Boredoms or Zeni Geva as "Japanese noise bands," I'm going to have to kill somebody.

Rather than commit homicide, I decided to do something about the problem, and attempt to help educate music fans in a more well-rounded way. Hence this magazine's existence. As our subtitle of "independent music" shows, we will focus on independent music, because mainstream pop doesn't interest us, and probably doesn't need our help, either. On the other hand, our focus will really be on "interesting music," and hence anything that strikes us as being of possible interest to our readers is fair game.

Besides the obligatory music reviews and artist interviews, we'll be including profiles of record labels, as a way of introducing our readers to as wide a variety of music as possible. To encourage

contact by our readers, a list of addresses for labels and bands is included at the end of the magazine.

In addition, while the magazine is going to remain a music magazine, we hope to include coverage of books, films, and any other cultural topics which seem appropriate. Music doesn't occur in a vacuum, and we hope to help our readers get a complete picture of the environment in which Japanese indie music is situated.



Towards that end, we would like to extend an open invitation to other people out there who may have something to contribute. Being mere mortals, the folks involved in this magazine are not omnipotent nor rich, and we cheerfully admit to having gaping holes in our music collections. If you've got some information, get in touch and let us know.

What have we got here?

In this first issue, you'll find interviews with Der Eisenrost, the new group formed by Tetsuo soundtrack artist Chu Ishikawa; the infamously bizarre Omoide Hatoba; noise artist K2; long-time experimental artist Seed Mouth;

and avant-rockers Children Coup d'Etat.

On the label front, you'll read about the influential indie label Alchemy Records, as well as the tiny Monellaphone label.

We have a few articles to help round things out, including a Japan tour/vacation report and some live show reviews.

And of course there are reviews, as many as we could include this time around. This being our first issue, we've taken the liberty of reviewing both new and old releases, in an attempt to help introduce as wide a variety of items as possible.

So enjoy, and please get in touch with your thoughts, ideas and opinions about the magazine.

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Music, video, magazine and other submissions for review are welcomed with open arms. A copy of the issue containing any review will be sent to the label and/or artist. Not everything we receive can be reviewed, but we'll try.

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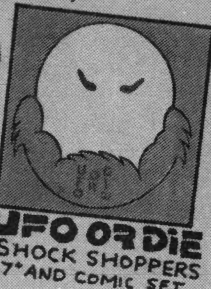


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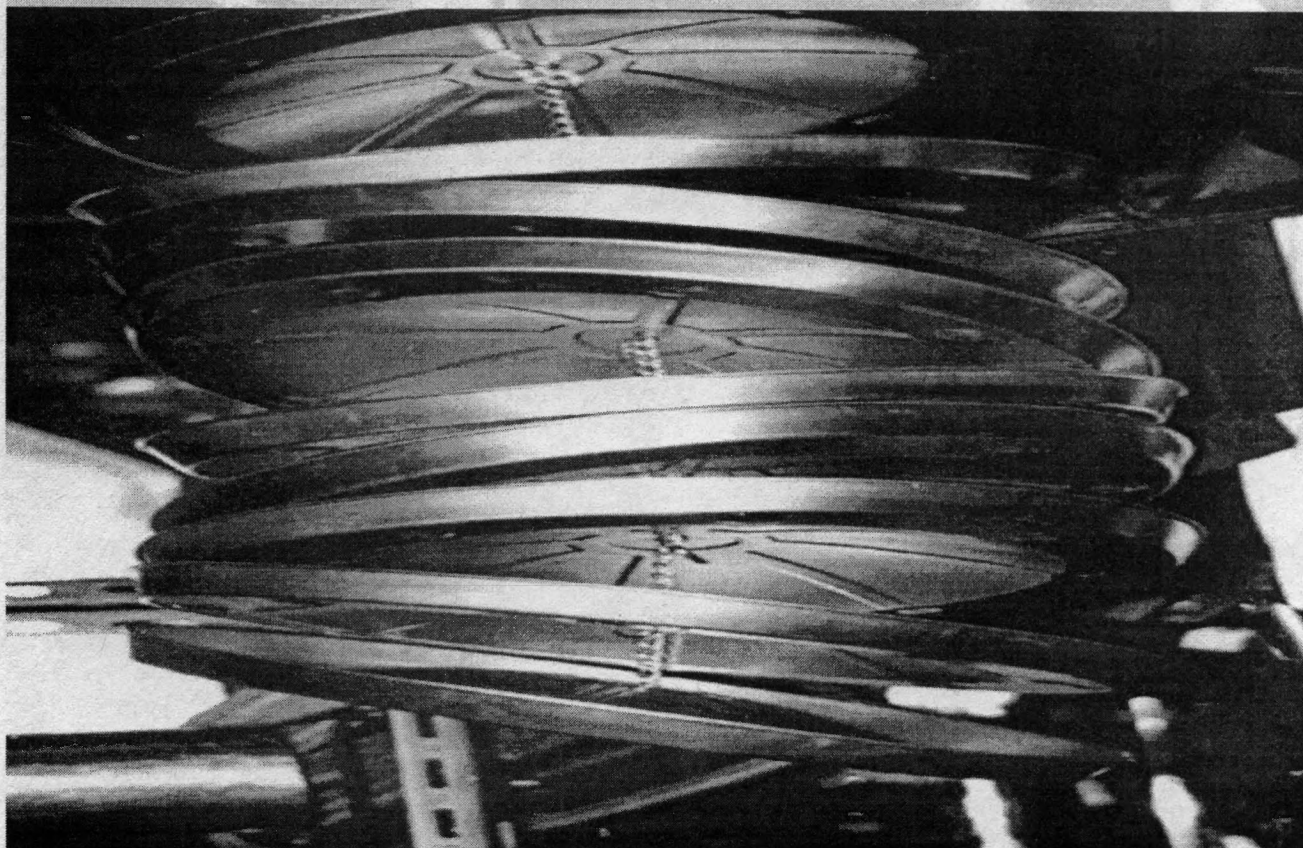
EISENROST

CHU ISHIKAWA

FOLLOWS HIS ACCLAIMED SOUNDTRACK FOR

GETSUO: THE IRON MAN

WITH REAL 'HEAVY METAL' MUSIC



Der Eisenrost is the new band headed by Chu Ishikawa, composer and performer of the music for the underground film "Tetsuo: The Iron Man." Ishikawa's CD of the "Tetsuo" soundtrack was released on ADisc in Japan and then re-issued by Japan Overseas for sale outside of Japan. A member of Zeitlich Vergeltes in the 80s, Chu Ishikawa has now formed Der Eisenrost to achieve more intense, harder and heavier sound than what he worked on for the film soundtrack. This interview was done by Shoei Go on August 27, 1994 at Osaka's Muse Hall.

Ongaku Otaku: First of all, please introduce yourselves.

Der Eisenrost: Ishikawa, metal percussion. Kawahara, metal percussion. Yabuki, bass. Seki, vocals.

OO: How did the band come together?

I: I did the music for the films "Tetsuo" and "Tetsuo II" and I wanted to somehow perform the music live. So I talked to my friends Yabuki and Seki, also Kawahara, who was an actor and assistant director of "Tetsuo II," and got this band together in April 1993.

OO: Where do you play?

I: Tokyo mostly, and twice a year in Kyoto and Osaka.

OO: Where are you originally from?

I: Yokohama.

K: Tokyo.

Y: Okayama.

S: Tokyo.

OO: How did you get to know each other?

K: In my case, I was an assistant director of "Tetsuo II" and I also acted in it. I met Ishikawa, who was in charge of the film music, and started to get involved. I always wanted to make a band, but I was mainly acting until recently. Now I'm not acting. I was forced into this situation.

I: Kawahara was giving me a great deal of advice when I was working on the "Tetsuo" CD. I thought he had a very interesting sense.

OO: What bands do you like and dislike?

K: ...I don't have bands I don't like.

Y: No kidding.

I: ...I like Joy Division. I don't like so-called American rock and hard-rock. You know, those bright ones.

OO: You don't like hard-rock?

I: Probably the hard-rock you're thinking of and the one I'm thinking of are different.

Y: Probably different, yeah...

Everyone likes different music in our band, but probably the music that everyone dislikes is the same. Well, to make it easy to understand, the top ten bands, pop bands, are what we dislike in common.

I: It's because we're not in that world. So we are not jealous of pop or popular bands, it's because our nature wouldn't accept it.

OO: I understand that.

I: I am not thinking about just playing in Japan. We will probably have a release coming up early next year or so, so we would like it to be distributed all over the world and have people in the world listen to it with honest feelings. I guess we are going off the subject, you'd better check out what everyone else likes and dislikes.

K: Well...when I first got an impulse with music, it was in the techno-pop period, like Kraftwerk. So I think I have always been on the same line. I like Depeche Mode, electro-pop. I was never so involved in music like now. So what I am experiencing through this band is a new experience for me. Since I started in this band, I started to listen to other music more seriously.

OO: Which do you like? Acting or music?

K: I am not thinking of acting right now. But being in a band is kind of like acting for me. First when I joined the band, I took the band as performance. Lately, I am changing from being an actor on stage with the band to more like a musician.

I: Let the rest of the members talk about the bands they like and dislike.

Y: I don't have just one favorite band. For example, I like a certain period of King Crimson, and I like a certain period of Japan. I choose songs to like rather than bands. I listen to a wide variety of music.

OO: What do you listen to recently?

Y: I don't listen to music so much lately. If I were going to...probably I would listen to reggae.

OO: Sounds good. How about you, Seki?

S: I like a certain period of Depeche Mode, but I dislike another period of them.

Y: I don't think anyone is so influenced by certain music and tries to achieve a certain sound. That's why we can go for anything.

OO: Do you practice often?

I: Normally, once a week.

OO: Do you see each other when you don't practice?

K: I think that's important, that we do that.

I: Well, we see each other once a week, so that's enough.

OO: What else do you want to add?

I: You haven't asked me about our music, I think. Is it necessary to talk about it?

OO: Sure, go ahead.

I: I feel like I am interviewing myself. (everyone laughs) Well, Shoei just recovered from sickness, so this is hard on her.

S: How are we going to change in the future?

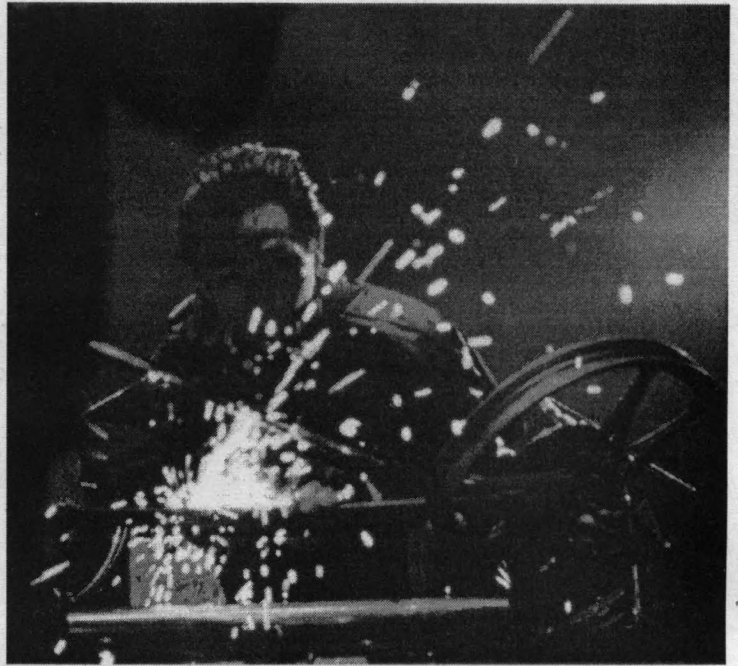
I: Yeah, that's the kind of subject...so...what kind of music do we do?

K: It's not describable.

I: That's true. Well, I make all of my instruments from metal trash. I put the trash together to make my instruments. I use 12 to 13 instruments at one time on stage.

Y: Of course, music is to be sensed by the body. We are a band that emphasizes this point, I think. We will have releases in the future, but we'd like everyone to see the actual

*"THE REASON WHY I MAKE
THE **METAL PERCUSSION**
IS BECAUSE THEIR SOUND
COMES RIGHT TO THE
BRAIN."*



Y: Once we played in a Tokyo club called Gold (more like a discoteque). There was some kind of event. They didn't have a good PA system, plus



we were put up onto a tight little stage (we need a lot of space because of the huge metal percussion instruments). Then we thought, oh well... We will just play as usual anyway. There were many cute girls there. As we started to play, they came over and looked at us like they had never seen anything that scary. Then they started to become extremely loud. I enjoyed that.

OO: What is your future plan?

I: There is a live documentary video coming up, and a CD too.

K: I hope to go abroad.

OO: Where do you want to go?

K: I want to go to London because my sister lives there.

OO: When did you start making your instruments?

I: When I was 15.

OO: Did you start collecting metal trash then?

I: No, no. But it has been 10 years since I started metal percussion. I was 19 when I started collecting metal trash.

OO: How old are you now?

I: 28, I think.

OO: Were you the leader of Zeitlich Vergelter?

I: No, I did metal percussion.

OO: When did Zeitlich Vergelter exist?

I: Between 1984 and 1986. The sound was similar to Der Eisenrost. The

the same time, the music that I wanted to do became different from what the vocalist wanted to do. So we split. The vocalist wanted to do more like African music.

OO: What do "Zeitlich Vergelter" and "Der Eisenrost" mean?

I: "Zeitlich Vergelter" is "timely revenger" — I didn't name that band. "Der Eisenrost" means "rust."

OO: When did you others start playing?

K: My parents bought me a guitar when I was 13.

Y: I stole a guitar when I was 13. That was the beginning. I started bass when I was 19. Until 19 I liked blues and acoustic sounds.



I: Wherever.

Y: I want to go to unusual places like Saudi Arabia, Yugoslavia, etc.

I: As the "Tetsuo" film has been going around the world and getting a good response from people, I want to see how people will react to our music. I think we have achieved the sound that expresses our "reality." We are not trying to do something new.

difference is that ZV used more manual instruments, and DE has more machines.

OO: Did ZV have any releases?

I: Yes, one 7" EP on the TransRecords label. Also we were on their compilation LP, and on the "Dead Tech Sampler" on the German label Dossier.

OO: What happened to the band?

I: We were kind of on the edge, and at

S: I started guitar at 14. I started vocals 3 years ago to fill in for the band I was in.

OO: Do you like doing vocals?

S: It's fun, but sometimes it's boring.

Y: His guitar is very interesting. He is really good.

S: I broke my finger bone. I was doing percussion on stage and my finger broke.

K: You should cure it.

S: No, it hurts too much.

I: Yeah, our live show is dangerous. I cut my leg with the electric saw once. My hands are cut all over by the metals. Sometimes when the show gets very intense, we throw the metals around on stage.

OO: Have you hurt the audience?

I: No, never. Our state of mind is very offensive but very calm at the same time on stage. And that state lasts for 30 minutes.

Y: It's only our tension that makes the show last for 30 minutes.

K: Whenever we practice, out of three hours of studio time, we only play for an hour total.

I: We play as hard as we can when we practice, too.

K: It takes about 30 minutes to put the instruments together and another 30 minutes to take them apart. So that alone takes an hour. And after 30 minutes of practice, we must rest for 30 minutes. So...

Y: Come to see us if you get a chance.

K: We believe we are influential.

OO: It was a serious interview.

Y: Well, we are serious people. (everyone laughs)

"SOMETIMES WHEN THE
SHOW GETS VERY
INTENSE, WE THROW THE
METALS AROUND ON
STAGE."

Their show that night was just as intense as the other nights. As usual Ishikawa wore metal knee caps on stage. His short spiky hair and sharp looking eyes made him look like an iron man. Kawahara was a gentle-looking human. Yabuki's hair was in dreads, and Seki was quiet.

Japan Overseas will release a Der Eisenrost live CD which will include that particular night's show.

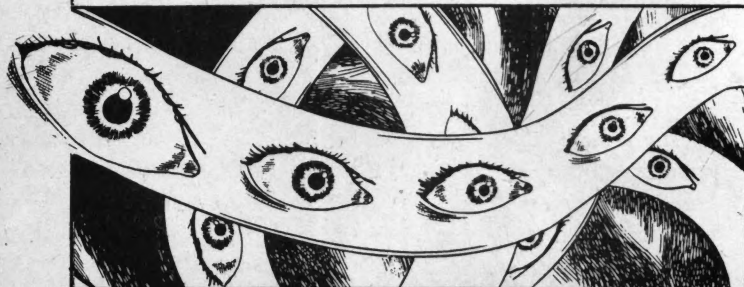


GREETINGS

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ored hair, posed in immaculate photo shoots. These are bands like X (the Japanese one, not the American one!), Hide, Luna Sea, Die in Cries. Then farther in, there's a black & white section which is more interesting for most indie music fans, with coverage of bands like Volume Dealers, Super Junky Monkey, Def. Master, and lots of interesting reviews of both Japanese releases and imports. All in Japanese.

G-Scope

I won't review any particular issue of this one, since they're all pretty cool. Subtitled "Kansai Chaos Guide," this is a pretty glossy music magazine which has great coverage of the Kansai (Osaka/Kyoto) scene. They're especially fond of the Boredoms, so it seems as though every issue has at least some bit of news about them. They've got a "News & Views" section of gossip and info about local groups, a great calendar of live events, cool ads and



more. It's all in Japanese, but pretty cool even if you're not able to read it. The only source for this outside Japan that I know of is to order it from Japan Overseas (see address section).

Japankore

The latest issue of *Japankore* is #4, which marks several changes in the zine. First of all, it's now free; though there aren't many ads, I guess he's gotten enough to cover the expenses of printing it, which is great. Also, with this issue it's being printed in a big newsprint format, with a tiny bit of color on the front page too. As before, though, the layout is simple, sloppy but effective, and there are lots of reviews. This is one of the very few English-language magazines out there that covers only Japanese music — the emphasis here is, as the title indicates, hardcore punk and its offshoots, though there's also coverage of noise and other areas. In addition to the reviews, this issue

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contains a brief lesson making vegetarian sushi, and a very interesting letter from a Japanese punk. In addition to the zine, Japankore's also released a series of cassettes at very reasonable prices. Write to Japankore, P.O. Box 8511, Warwick, RI 02888, U.S.A.

Jungle Life

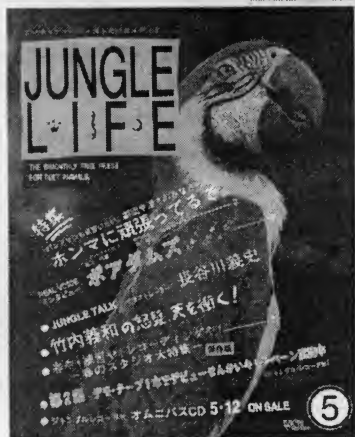
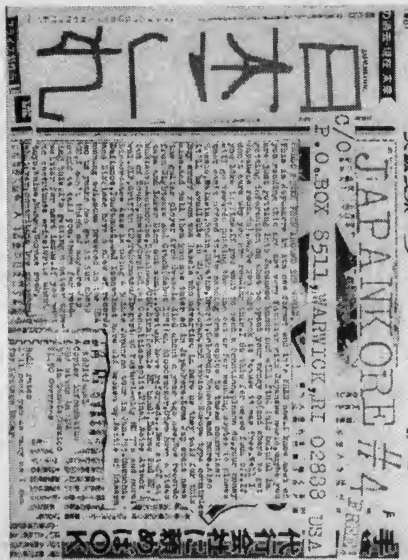
This one's subtitled "The Bi-monthly Free Press for Cult Animals." The issue I've got is Vol 5, from May 1994. It's got interviews with Eggs, Boredoms, Showy and more, plus record news, and plenty of interesting ads for records, recording studios in Tokyo, and other stuff. Small and concise, nothing flashy but perhaps worth keeping an eye open for if you're in Tokyo.

Mirra vol. 3

I frankly don't know if this magazine is still around; I haven't seen it lately, but I thought I'd mention this issue, and hopefully someone can write and tell me if it's still being published. This issue has lengthy interviews (all in Japanese) with Zeni Geva, Steve Albini, Nukey Pikes, Omoide Hatoba and more, plus cool record reviews and tons of live show reports. Lots of nice photos, too. So what about it, anyone — is this great magazine still being published?

Studio Voice, April 1994

Subtitled "Media mix Magazine," which is true to some extent. This is perhaps something like the Japanese version of *Details*; though focusing perhaps a bit more on music and the arts, it does have a definite fashion-type slant as well. This particular issue is fairly interesting, being about



the "Rebirth of Punk." It's got a funny "family tree" of punk history, from the Velvet Underground, Blue Cheer and Red Crayola through the Dead Boys, Sex Pistols, and Buzzcocks to Joy Division, Mark Stewart and the Rollins Band. Then they get into a 90s chart with weird connections between the Beastie Boys and KLF, Los Angeles Punk and Survival Research Laboratories, Wire and Can. The magazine does cover all sorts of territory here, including music, books, and movies. This particular issue has a good page on noise music by Masami Akita of Merzbow, too.

Switch

Big, glossy magazine from Japan, with coverage of primarily-trendy music, but recently they've at least started noticing some more indie-oriented items. This issue is Vol. 13 No. 1, from January 1995, and has Free Kitten on the cover. Inside, we get coverage of Kim Gordon, Yoshimi, short takes on groups including Melt-Banana, Super Ball, Love Pigs, and more. Aside from the music, there's a great photo essay of Herb Ritts pictures from Africa; an interview with Jean-Luc Godard, book reviews, and other arts coverage. All in Japanese, but lots of photos for non-readers.



CHILDREN COUP D'ETAT



I became familiar with Children Coup d'Etat first, as I recall, through the 7" single released by Public Bath in 1992, with two songs: "Shiva of Barbeque" and "Technepas." The music and the goofy drawings on the sleeve by leader Hosoi Hisato impressed me with both the band's imagination and their apparent sense of humor. Later in 1992 when I made my first visit to Japan, I was excited to discover the Children's first CD, "Masochistic Instruments," released on the then-fledgling Bloody Butterfly label. This CD (see review) collected many songs recorded during the band's lengthy career since its formation by Hosoi in 1982. Despite their long list of releases (which Hosoi couldn't even provide me with!), the band is basically unknown here in America. They perhaps weren't helped much by a review in Option which reversed the band's name with the CD title...

The core line-up of Children Coup d'Etat is Hosoi Hisato



"IS THERE ANY
COVER FUNNIER
THAN THE 007
THEME?"

(bass and vocals), Kawamura Keiko (violin), and Isoda Osamu (guitar). Kawamura's violin playing is, for me, one of the group's highlights. Its use for creating atmosphere and unusual juxtapositions of sound helps make their unique personality. The band is conscious of artists like Fred Frith, John Rose, and Tom Cora and their use of 'academic' instruments like the violin, but say they try to play in different styles.

The group's name, according to Hosoi, combines meanings: "'Children' means childish, immature, selfish, being not independent, and purity. 'Coup-d'etat' means revolution, change, by force, and anti-imperialism." Hence perhaps their goal of a selfish, immature desire for change? Such change can perhaps be heard in their unique sound.

Such a sound, though, combining violin with the standard bass and guitar, could end up seeming like self-absorbed art rock, if they didn't temper it with

their strange sense of humor. While they admit to liking the New York jazz sound, Hosoi says that they attempt a parody of existing styles. For example, one track on their CD breaks into the James Bond theme. As Hosoi asked, "Is there any cover funnier than the 007 theme? (yes, such as "Take the A Train," "Satisfaction" and so on)."

When asked about their audiences in Japan, Hosoi admitted that many of their audiences at live shows misunderstand the music. But the purpose of their live shows is to try to control the misunderstanding. For example, when they play on a bill with a jazz musician, they pretend to be a rock band; playing with a rock band, they pretend to be a progressive band; with an indie band, to be a free-jazz band.

Which goes towards explaining the title of their CD, *Masochistic Instruments*: "I say we are a very masochistic band. Natu-

rally, the instruments over-worked by us are more masochistic than us."

And the audience are the lucky ones. Look for their new CD to be released in 1995.





波止場

相

OMOIDE HATOBA

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ALCHEMY

RECORDS

Turning **LEAD** into **GOLD** ?

One of the most infamous independent record labels in Japan, Alchemy Records was formed by Yoshiyuki "Jojo" Hiroshige in the early 80s. The first release was an LP by Ultra Bide, the band he was in prior to forming the notorious noise unit Hijokaidan. Since then, Alchemy has released an impressive 29 LPs, over 70 CDs, and numerous singles and videotapes. The artists represented include numerous names now recognized outside Japan, such as the aforementioned Hijokaidan, Incapacitants, Sekiri, Hanatarashi, Omoide Hatoba, Merzbow and Masonna.

One of the most interesting things about Alchemy Records is that the list of releases truly reflects Jojo's personal musical tastes, which are wide-ranging. Hence Alchemy has released punk rock by Sekiri, The Genbaku Onanies, and SS; noise by Incapacitants, Merzbow and Masonna; psychedelia by Subvert Blaze, Marble Sheep and Angel'in Heavy Syrup; hard rock/metal by Danse Macabre, Sperma and Hanadensha; and uncategorizable

music by Totsuzen Danbole, Zenryoku Onanies and others. As Jojo says, he relies on his personal inspiration to decide what to release.

Regarding the label name, he claims that he felt his favorite music would have no worth for most people, but by releasing albums he might transform music 'poor' in appreciation into 'rich' music: alchemy. His personal favorite releases so far are the Sekiri *Take me to Sekiri* album, and the new Slap Happy Humphrey CD.

What follows is a complete discography of Alchemy Records' releases to date, with reviews of selected releases. Some releases, particularly LPs, are out of print, and are indicated as such. For those people in the U.S. and Europe looking for Alchemy releases, we recommend contacting either Subterranean Records or Japan Overseas (see address section).

Alchemy Records Discography

Vinyl LPs

§ARLP-001	Ultra Bide	<i>The Original Ultra Bide</i>
§ARLP-002	SS	<i>The Original SS</i>
§ARLP-003	Inu	<i>The Original Inu</i>
§ARLP-004	Hijokaidan	<i>Viva Angel</i>
§ARLP-005	Inu	<i>The Original Inu (w/ bonus flexi)</i>
§ARLP-006	Hijokaidan	<i>The King of Noise</i>
§ARLP-007	Hanatarashi	<i>Hanatarashi</i>
§ARLP-008	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>Nuclear Cowboy</i>
§ARLP-009	V.A.	<i>Alchemy Noise Omnibus</i>
§ARLP-010	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>Od'd on Live it Yourself</i>
ARLP-011	Sugiyama Shintaro	<i>Newton's Oblige</i>
§ARLP-012	Hijokaidan	<i>Tapes</i>
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§ARLP-015	Sekiri	<i>Push Push Baby</i>
§ARLP-016	Hijokaidan	<i>Limited Edition</i>
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§ARLP-018	Hanatarash	<i>2</i>
§ARLP-019	SOB-Kaidan	<i>Noise, Violence & Destroy</i>
§ARLP-020	Sekiri	<i>Take Me to Sekiri</i>
§ARLP-021	Mescaline Drive	<i>Deep Morning Glow</i>
§ARLP-022	Hijokaidan	<i>In Paris</i>
§ARLP-023	Sekiri	<i>Love Star</i>
ARLP-024	V.A.	<i>West Psychedelia 2</i>
§ARLP-025	Hanadensha	<i>The Golden Age of Heavy Blood</i>
§ARLP-026	Incapacitants	<i>Repo</i>
ARLP-027	Garlic Boys	<i>King of Smell</i>
§ARLP-028	V.A.	<i>Fear</i>
§ARLP-029	Subvert Blaze	<i>Subvert Art</i>

Compact Discs

ARCD-001	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>Essential</i>
ARCD-002	Sekiri	<i>The Story of Sekiri</i>
ARCD-003	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>G.H.Q.</i>
§ARCD-004	Hijokaidan	<i>Modern</i>
§ARCD-005	Idiot O'Clock	<i>Idiot O'Clock</i>
ARCD-006	V.A.	<i>Fear</i>
ARCD-007	V.A.	<i>Osaka Greasy Truckers</i>
§ARCD-008	Hijokaidan	<i>Zoroku no Kibyo</i>
§ARCD-009	Marble Sheep and the Rundown	<i>Sun's Children Marble Sheep...</i>
§ARCD-010	Sekiri	<i>Sekiri 2</i>
§ARCD-011	Garlic Boys	<i>Smegmania</i>

ARCD-012	Auschwitz	<i>Destiny Moon</i>
ARCD-013	V.A.	<i>Aiyoku Jinmin 12 Kyudan</i>
§ARCD-014	SS	<i>Live</i>
ARCD-015	Omoide Hatoba	<i>Daiongaku</i>
§ARCD-016	Subvert Blaze	<i>Subvert Art</i>
§ARCD-017	Merzbow	<i>Rainbow Electronics</i>
ARCD-018	Hijokaidan	<i>Romance</i>
ARCD-019	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>On Time</i>
§ARCD-020	Solmania	<i>Metamorphor Chorus</i>
ARCD-021	The Continental Kids	<i>Grand Punk Railroad</i>
ARCD-022	Incapacitants	<i>Feedback of N.M.S.</i>
ARCD-023	Sekiri	<i>Sekiri Valley</i>
ARCD-024	KGGM	<i>Revenge of KGGM</i>
ARCD-025	The Zenryoku Onanies	<i>Eedesshalo</i>
ARCD-026	Auschwitz	<i>Songs</i>
ARCD-027	Sekiri	<i>Take Me to Sekiri</i>
ARCD-028	Folk Tales	<i>One</i>
ARCD-029	Hoburakin	<i>Hoburakin</i>
ARCD-030	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>Desert Island Disk</i>
ARCD-031	Omoide Hatoba	<i>Suichu-Joe</i>
ARCD-032	Danse Macabre	<i>Total Macabre</i>
§ARCD-033	Sperma	<i>Jotei-Fukkatsu</i>
§ARCD-034	Angel'in Heavy Syrup	<i>Angel'in Heavy Syrup</i>
ARCD-035	Merzbow	<i>Great American Nude</i>
ARCD-036	Totsuzen Danbole	<i>Fubi</i>
ARCD-037	Rapes	<i>Final Collection</i>
ARCD-038	Hijokaidan	<i>Windom</i>
ARCD-039	Incapacitants	<i>Fabrication</i>
ARCD-040	SOB-Kaidan	<i>Noise, Violence & Destroy</i>
§ARCD-041	Hanadensha	<i>The Golden Age of Heavy Blood</i>
ARCD-042	V.A.	<i>World Record</i>
ARCD-043	Sekiri	<i>Naked Sekiri</i>
ARCD-044	V.A.	<i>Aiyoku Jinmin Battle Royal</i>
§ARCD-045	Subvert Blaze	<i>Subvert Art II</i>
§ARCD-046-49	Hijokaidan	<i>The Never Ending Story of the King of Noise 4CD box</i>
ARCD-050	Omoide Hatoba	<i>Black Hawaii</i>
§ARCD-051-52	Hanadensha	<i>Hanaden Bless All 2CD</i>
§ARCD-053	Garlic Boys	<i>Alchemy Best</i>
§ARCD-054	Griffin	<i>The Album</i>
ARCD-055	Angel'in Heavy Syrup	<i>Angel'in Heavy Syrup II</i>
ARCD-056	The Nihilist Spasm Band	<i>What About Me</i>
ARCD-057	Masonna	<i>Mademoiselle Anne Sanglante Ou Notre Nymphomanie Aureole</i>
ARCD-058	Sperma	<i>Megami Tensei</i>

ARCD-059	Incapacitants	<i>Quietus</i>
ARCD-060	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>All the Way</i>
ARCD-061-64	Merzbow	
	<i>Metalvelodrome</i>	4CD box
ARCD-065	Zenryoku Onanies	<i>Dorei</i>
	<i>Fukkatsu</i>	
ARCD-066	Solmania	<i>Psychedelic</i>
ARCD-067	Hijokaidan	<i>Modern</i>
ARCD-068	Masonna	<i>Noskl in Ana</i>
ARCD-069	Hijokaidan	<i>Tapes</i>
ARCD-070	Incapacitants	<i>No Progress</i>
ARCD-071	Slap Happy Humphrey	<i>Slap Happy</i>
	<i>Humphrey</i>	

Singles

§AWWR-001	Rapes	<i>Murderer's Night</i>
§AWWR-002	KGM	<i>Fight Back Do It</i>
§AWWR-003	Danse Macabre	<i>Danse Macabre</i>
AWWR-004	Garlic Boys	<i>Yokozuna</i>
§AWWR-005	The Zenryoku Onanies	<i>Onanies At First</i>
§AWWR-006	Sekiri	<i>Konya Seiko Ranman</i>
AWWR-007	The Zenryoku Onanies	<i>Kaneclar Cowboy</i>
§AWWR-008	Griffin	<i>Sisiku</i>
§AWWR-009	The Zenryoku Onanies	<i>Zenryoku Head Quruutar</i>
AWWR-010	Caramel Monster	<i>Caramel Monster</i>
§AWWR-011	Bustmonsters	<i>Weedhead</i>

Cassettes

§ARCA-001	Hijokaidan	<i>Delta 8000</i>
§ARCA-002	V.A.	<i>Rikai no Wa</i>
ARCA-003	V.A.	<i>Alchemy Sampler</i>

Videos

ARVC-001	SOB-Kaidan	<i>Live</i>
ARVC-002	V.A.	<i>West Psychodelia Live</i>
ARVC-003	Hijokaidan	<i>Live and Confused</i>
ARVC-004	Sekiri	<i>Live and Vacation</i>
ARVC-005	SOB-Kaidan	<i>One More Red Nightmare</i>
ARVC-006	Hijokaidan	<i>2</i>
ARVC-007	V.A.	<i>Fear</i>
ARVC-008	The Genbaku Onanies	<i>Genbakumania</i>
ARVC-009	Sekiri	<i>Live and Hawaiian</i>
ARVC-010	Okano Futoshi	<i>Rock Drum Basic</i>
ARVC-011	Sekiri	<i>In America</i>

§ Indicates out of print title as of this publication; however, Alchemy does re-issue CDs occasionally.

Angel'in Heavy Syrup

"Angel'in Heavy Syrup II"

CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-055

As should be obvious, this is the second album from this group of women, but in many ways it's an almost entirely new group: new drummer, and a second guitarist added. The sound hasn't changed much, though; they're still working in a nebulous area all their own, sandwiched between sweet pop music, traditional Japanese music, and old European psychedelic jamming. "Introduction I," for example, includes melodic xylophone, heavy bass, beautiful dreamy vocals, gentle guitar, and totally fuzzed-out wah-guitar. Not all at the same time, mind you. "Naked Sky High" opens with pretty plucked guitar notes, then suddenly distortion, thick reverb, and pounding drums kick in and you're in some dense psychedelic nightmare. Slowly a tuneful guitar line emerges, the feedback is carefully brought under control, and Mineko's gorgeous vocals make the nightmare into a dream. Beautifully done. It's this melding of heavy drug-infused psychedelic Blue Cheer-isms with traditional melodies, heavenly vocals and vaguely pop-oriented touches which allows the Angels to walk the thin line between accessibility and inscrutability, making them enjoyable on the surface and worthy of intent listening as well. Of course, the cover of "I Got You Babe" tacked on the end here is a whole 'nother thing which I can't even begin to discuss here.

Hanadensha

"Hanaden Bless All"

2CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-051/52

Big double-CD package of heavy riffing and, yes, grunge-laden rock. This four piece is nominally led by Hira (Boredoms bassist), credited for "Scream & Whisper" as well as bass on one track. Boredoms fanatics who pick this up expecting more twisted tune-crafting a la Boredoms and Omoide Hatoba will be in for a shock when faced with this relatively straightforward rehabilitation of 70s rock. The news that Hanadensha is supposedly being picked up by Warner Reprise in the wake of the Boredoms was less than surprising; they could tour with new labelmates Mudhoney and not raise many eyebrows. The tunes here are not quite as imitative as they might at first seem, though; there's a vocal freedom which indicates that Hira has spent a lot of time watching Yamatsuka's antics, and odd structural anomalies force the rockin' momentum off the tracks into something completely different at unexpected intervals. But then they veer back on course and it's headbanging time for a while. Not Alchemy's most adventurous group by any means, but they've got a

few tricks up their collective sleeves and it's fun to go along for the ride sometimes, when you're in that nostalgic rock kinda mood.

Hijokaidan

"Tapes"

CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-069

This new release is actually a long-awaited reissue of the LP originally released in 1986 as ARLP-012. To take things back even further, two of the tracks were actually released originally on cassette. This reissue wisely retains the original cover art of the LP, which is actually lengthy liner notes about the band and the tracks on the album. Hence those looking for details about Hijokaidan would do well to obtain this release for information value alone. As far as the "music" goes, this essential release includes the earliest existing recordings of Hijokaidan, as well as a spirited cover version of Hawkwind's "Silver Machine" which in itself is a miracle of hybridization: noise meets space-rock, and we all come out winners. There's quite a variety of material here, which demonstrates the evolution of Japan's oldest existing noise band. From a two member partnership on the opening track "Angel Dust" (from 1979) through the dandy "Circles" with six participants. The epic "Salem's Lot" is particularly notable as a live recording at the infamous Eggplant live house in Osaka, with frightening vocalizations by Yuka. As a bonus of sorts, "No-Titled" is included, which is actually an Incapacitants track featuring (of course) T. Mikawa and Ai Yamatsuka (back in his Hanatarashi days) — this is an unusually structured and almost rhythmic piece. Overall, this illuminating and historical release actually surpasses its archival value with its massive enjoyment value, which means in order to avoid your own potential obsolescence you've already started work to obtain it, right?

Incapacitants

"No Progress"

CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-070

An ironic title for this CD, which is primarily a collection of old, out of print material. "No Progress" leaves me wondering if Mikawa really cares about progress as most of us would define it. When dealing with full-force electronic blasts of white-hot noise, is progress even relevant? Where does one progress to from this point, if one cares to progress in the first place? In any case, this 73-minute CD contains five tracks, mostly quite long, beginning with the incredibly harsh "Long Awaited," originally the B-side of the "Pallo III" cassette. The squealing, high-frequency waves of this recording, remixed for the CD, are guaranteed to knock the weak of constitution flat on their backs. "Fallen Banker," an amusing title considering Mikawa's occupation, was originally released on the "Hard Drugs" compilation cassette from Nux Organization. "Inverted Yield Curve," from a limited-edition split 7", continues the ultra-heavy audio torture, and the unreleased and amazingly-titled "Libra was dead. Since then, he has gone to Morgan Stanley." gives you more of what you need. A new track, "BIS Conspiracy," shows that if Incapacitants has made "No Progress" as claimed, Mikawa has not lost ground either. Almost 20 minutes of sonic intensity the likes of which could be used for military purposes in the right hands. A fine collection from one of the most powerful noise artists in the world.

Masonna

"Noskl in Ana"

CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-068

Subtitled "Rare Tracks Collection," this CD contains nine tracks of audio harshness from Maso Yamazaki, primarily excerpted from older, out of print releases. The exceptions are "Live at Gilman St," which naturally was

recorded at Berkeley's Gilman St space in November 1993; and a couple of unreleased tracks. The CD opens with "Mad Onna Part 1," from 1989's "Mad Onna" cassette; it's a squealing, distorted composition of vocals and feedback. "Prologue of Like a Vagina," from 1988's "Like a Vagina" cassette, is a frenetic, manic squelching vibratory mass of noise less than a minute long. "Noskl in Ana 'Turn Table Mix'" is an unreleased mix of a track from the infamous limited-edition "Masonna vs Bananamara" LP. It's a high-pitched squeal of feedback and screaming which abruptly stops, then plays very slowly at a deep pitch before starting up again. The speed changes are bewildering. The live track begins with crowd noises and talking, then the feedback and noise take over; it's a dense wall of screeching and screaming and distortion. "Mado-moiselle Anne Sanglante Take 2" is an out-take from the previous CD which begins slowly with an ominous chord, into which waves of noise intrude as the piece continues; it's a particularly impressive piece. The previously-unreleased track "The Ultimate Masonanie" concludes the CD with a notably harsh wall of white noise. The beautiful design of the artwork is worthy of note as well; it looks like an old record album, in blazing hot pink. This CD is one for the collection, no doubt.

Solmania

"Psychedelic"

CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-066

This is the second CD from Masahiko Ohno, also known as Solmania (who also happens to be the primary graphic designer for Alchemy Records). These three tracks, totalling about 33 minutes, show an evolution from previous Solmania releases in that he coaxes a greater range of sounds out of his special modified guitar here. Clearly, he has also established more control of his equip-

ment, in that it is evident that each sound occurs when he wants it to, not because it simply happened. Since this recording, Ohno has built a newer guitar which should provide him with an unprecedented amount of noise muscle. The CD opens with the sound of a motorcycle revving its engine (a continuation of the theme which started with the title and the CD artwork's pictures of motorcycles), which is drowned out by high-pitched feedback. This, the title track, develops into a dense festival of wild squelching and roaring sounds. The second track, "Nitro Mary & High-Side Blues," begins thickly yet sedately with heavy fuzzed-out guitar buckings, and develops into an ultra-massive wall of crunch. "Polar Bola" is another unstoppable behemoth of distortion which has so many sounds and levels that it's miraculous that it all came from one person's guitar and voice. A physical, almost touchable dose of hardcore noise.



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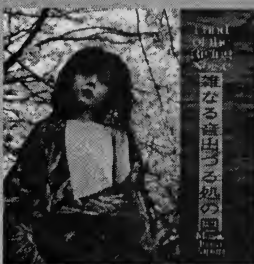
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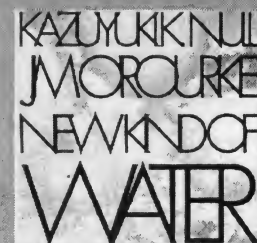
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I recently discovered the Monellaphone label when I encountered a 7" single by The Gerogerigegege entitled "Kitanomaru Hyakkei." I'd never heard of the label, so I wrote a letter and very quickly received a reply from Kobayash Kensuke with some of his other releases. I was intrigued by the variety of recordings on the tapes, which includes noise, trash-rock, and more.

Kobayash started the Monellaphone label in August 1992, at first only for himself. He didn't think that he wanted a lot of people to listen to his cassettes. But later, he wanted to have a band, so in order to find members, he sold some of his cassettes to record shops in hopes that people who heard them would contact him. He was very surprised when a teenage girl wrote to him, and they recorded the Monellaphobia "Fear of Freak Sounds" tape together (see review). Kobayash is working alone again now, but is always interested in finding collaborators.

When asked about how he finds artists to release, he says "I release works by artists (or not artists) who I know or whose sound surprises me. I do not write to lots of people." Despite not writing to lots of people, Monellaphone seems to have attracted quite a few artists: upcoming releases include 7" singles from Deisel Guitar, and Boredoms/Omoide Hatoba guitarist Yamamoto Seiichi.

I was curious about how well cassettes sell in Japan, but Kobayash had a different reply than I expected: "I can not sell a large quantity of cassette tapes, because I am lazy. I hate tape dubbing work and advertising for selling." However, he agreed that there's not a large market in any case. "Most Japanese people don't know that there are such kinds of music, I think."

Most Monellaphone cassette releases are short and inexpensive (even including airmail), which

makes them an easy way to explore some unusual sounds. I recommend contacting Monellaphone and sending a little money for a couple of cassettes, even if he does hate tape dubbing!

Kobayash also publishes the xeroxed contact zine *Cassette Tapers File*, a fine source for cassette labels, though all in Japanese.

Monellaphone
c/o Kobayash Kensuke
Mezon FTB-108, 1-196-1 Dotechoun
Ohmiyasi, Saitamaken 330
Japan

Monellaphone Discography (comments by Kobayash)

- #MS01 Nihonrettou-Nama-Kensuke
"Don't Trust Over Livin'" C-10
Munyu-munyu guitar pop and acid techno style.
- #MS02 Raw
"Fake Rock Bomb" C-20
I don't like it! Shit!
- #MS03 Negative Bunch
"Deb Jersey Gun" C-10
Noisy garage rock.
- MS04 TK Avec Homerun C-20
Taka (Mi-U) and Kobayash (Monella) play junk voice and honyo gtr!
- MS05 Monellaphobia
"You Shall Overcome Monellaphobia" C-10
Soft noise, the lowest model!
- MS06 Monellaphobia
"Bizarre Collection" C-20
Childish low action! Enfant terrible! Guest -

- MS07 *Matsudo Yougo Orchestra.*
Ohmoji no Watasi no Komoji
"Mi-U" C-20
*Bizarre voice, deep groove and
underground atmosphere.*
- MS08 Monellaphobia
"Fear of Freak Sounds" C-20
*Drunk oyaji talking voice, sonic sound,
mgege!*
- MS09 Raw
"Radical Audio Whimsy" C-20
Best anal rock. I like George Clinton!
- MS10 Bakuretsu Bureikoh
"Live Riot" C-30
*Churu-churu live best trax, with Chinese
narration.*
- MS11 The Gerogerigegege
"Kitanomaru Hyakkei" 7" single
*Japanese bizarre king! Early recordings
with booklet. Very rare.*
- MS12 Hakui no Tenshi to Analsex
"Anal Fuck with Angel in White" C-10
Crazy techno-punk in Hokkaido.
- §MCI13 Acid Sheeps & Monellaphobia
"Side B with Soul Zero" C-46
*A.S. is jumping rock in Sapporo. 3 feet
high and rising?*
- §MDI14 Ultra Fuckers 7" single
*The most respectable farmer-junk. Don't
worry, be happy!*
- §MDI15 Deisel Guitar 7" single
Solid gtr noise from nu school.
- §MDI16 Yamamoto Seiichi 7" single
??????????
- §MDI17 Monellaphobia
"Funk, Super Vision" C-10
*The adventure of Monellaphobia on the
wheels of steel!*

‡ No longer available.

§ Forthcoming.

Price:

Cassettes 6US\$ each (inc. P&P)

7" singles 10US\$ each (inc. P&P)

Hakui no Tenshi to Analsex

"Analfuck with the Angel in White"

Cassette, Monellaphone Cassettes, MS 12

This short tape has a couple of brief pieces of very low-fi garagey sort of scumrock, with weird vocals. Vaguely Boredoms-like in a way, though the music is more straightforward. The second side's piece is somewhat more ordinary rock complete with lead keyboards, which lends a vaguely new wave feel to it. The sloppiness and mediocre recording quality

sort of add to the attraction here in a way, because a slicker production would have most likely robbed it of its feeling of fun. The group name means the same thing as the title, by the way: literally " analsex with the white-robed angel."

Monellaphobia

"Fear of Freak Sounds"

Cassette, Monellaphone Cassettes, MS 8

This trash-noise tape by Kobayash and Kumulla is two sides of severely cut-and-pasted noises and sounds strung together at high speed for maximum confusion. Screams, yells, rumbles, crunches, squeals of feedback, funny vocalizations, strange electronic blips all rush by in a frenzy. Side B starts off a bit slow with a spoken-word (in Japanese) piece over a meandering guitar line, but then picks up with more strange noises and cut-ups. Perhaps "freak sounds" is indeed the best possible description of this. It doesn't really remind me of anyone else's noise work, which is good. Perhaps somewhere between Violent Onsen Geisha and Merzbow lies this landscape of funny media cut up and scrambled noise construction, but really no comparisons need be made. Very enjoyable and fun stuff.

Bakuretsu Bureikoh

"Live Riot"

Cassette, Monellaphone Cassettes, MS 10

Complete garage rock, perhaps something like Pussy Galore would have been if they had played faster and their guitars had squealed more. Regular drum beats, growling and yelling vocals, and squeaky feedbacking guitars galore, in fact. The recording quality is definitely low, basically one microphone in someone's bedroom, I suspect. Everything's fairly clear actually, but there's no low end to speak of. A fine example of do-it-yourself production.

Raw

"Radical Audio Whimsy"

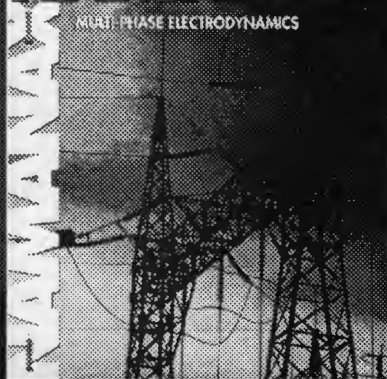
Cassette, Monellaphone Cassettes, MS 9

Great group name, very descriptive. At least some of the members of this group seem to be Americans, at least going by the names, but who knows. The track names are very Boredoms-influenced: "Rolling Anal Weirdies," "Anal-Core," "No No Nose On!" and so forth. The music is sort of fast rock with heavily distorted guitar, heavy rhythms and Boredoms-like vocals. Screams, shouts, mumbles, and strange electronic sounds fight amidst the wreckage of deconstructed rock'n'roll. There's a wide variety of interesting tracks here, and the production is actually pretty clear when it wants to be. Hopefully these guys will do something more in the future; I'll be looking forward to it.

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Journey to the Rising Sun

Journey to the Rising Sun

In April of 1994, I arranged to visit Japan and play a few Trance shows. This was my second trip to Japan; the first was back in September of 1992, with Torture Chorus. This time it was just myself and Loren, who came along just to visit Japan. We were there for about two weeks, but I only played three Trance shows; two in Tokyo (with Null and Jojo from Hijokaidan, respectively) and one in Osaka (with Sam from Nimrod and Solmania together). That left plenty of time for sight-seeing. The following is a selection of my notes from the trip.

Photographs by Loren Rhoads.

We got up painfully early on the morning of April 7 and took a shuttle to the airport to catch our first flight, which was to Vancouver. That was pretty short, but we had a long layover before our flight to Tokyo, so we hung out in a coffee shop in the airport there. The flight to Tokyo was around 9 hours, and our original reserved seats (window and the aisle next to it) were broken, so we ended up stuck in the middle of the plane with strangers on every side. I hate that.

When we arrived at Narita airport, customs and immigration was no problem, just like last time I came. The customs guy looked through a few of our bags until he saw my Japanese textbooks. Then he just laughed and waved us on.

Null and Eito (Zeni Geva's drummer) met us and we put our bags in the van (actually Null's mother's). Eito drove, since Null doesn't have a license. The van had a gizmo which beeped whenever we got above 100kph, which was truly annoying. Null lives in Kanagawa, about a three-hour drive from Narita airport. It was a nice enough drive, actually. I spent a lot of it reading the signs on various buildings as we went by, looking up any characters I couldn't remember. I kept doing that the whole trip. By the end, my katakana was pretty good.

Null's house is one of the biggest I've stayed at in Japan. Two stories, with a guest suite of rooms on the second floor that we stayed in; Null's rooms were across the hall. The first floor had the bathroom, kitchen, living/dining room, and some other rooms

that Null's mother and grandmother live in. We ordered some pizzas (from a place called Pizza California, which we all thought was pretty funny). The pizzas were pretty interesting: a curry one with potato, a chicken and potato with thin strings of seaweed, and a 'Chinese' style one which I didn't care for much. The others were really good. Last time I was in Japan we had pizza too, and there seem to be more weird varieties here than in the U.S., where everyone's stuck on pepperoni.

After eating, Null pulled out a bunch of photos from the last Zeni Geva tour, and then reached into his files and pulled out some baby Null photos, which were pretty hilarious.

It was really cold that night, so Null got out a kerosene heater to warm up the rooms. I don't know how old the house is, but it doesn't have any heat, so they rely on small heaters.

We woke up pretty late, but Null was still asleep so I tried and failed to figure out the shower on my own. I'm accustomed to Japanese bathrooms, which I actually like a lot more than American bathrooms. In Japan you always have a split bath: toilet in one room, sink with shower in another. The shower and tub are always in their own separate little room, so you can splash water around as much as you want in there. But I wasn't able to get much in the way of hot water for some reason, so I had a lukewarm shower. Better than none, but it was kinda cold in there. Null later showed me how to set the tempera-

ture with a little computerized panel which I had assumed was just for the tub. All the buttons were labeled in kanji anyway, so even if I'd guessed that it controlled the shower temperature, I might have accidentally boiled myself. When you turn on the water, though, it comes on automatically at your preset temperature; so when you wash your hair, you can turn off the water to conserve, and then when you press the button you get nice warm water again.

After Null and Eito (who slept over) got up we had an "American-style" breakfast with toast, butter, cinnamon sugar, fried eggs, corn chowder, Nescafe, and left-over pizza.

Null's living/dining room was our first experience with the electric carpets that some of our friends had. Basically it's an electric blanket, but since it's common to sit on cushions on the floor, they make carpets which you can set to a certain temperature. Sitting in the cold morning eating breakfast on a warm carpet is a nice cozy feeling.

After breakfast we set off for Shinjuku Loft, where we were playing that evening. It was a two-hour drive. The club is pretty notorious; I guess it's been around forever. It's a basement club (as most smaller clubs in Japan seem to be) with an incredibly tiny backstage which thankfully has a separate entrance from the street. The club slopes downwards inside in stages, which was cool because you could stand in the back and still see the band over everybody's heads. It's not a big place, probably holding about 200 people at absolute capacity, which it might have gotten to that night.

Around this time Loren started feeling really lousy. I wondered if she had accidentally eaten some shellfish of some sort, which she's really allergic to. Didn't seem likely, though, so



Street in Yokohama. At many corners, because the streets are so narrow and the corners are tight, convex mirrors are mounted on poles so that drivers can check for cross-traffic.

we couldn't figure out what the problem was. It was an awkward situation, though, since there was no place for her to go. She ended up

making it through the evening okay, wandering around Shinjuku by herself at night. She had fun checking out all the different vending machines. We eventually decided it must have simply been awful jet lag.

Speaking of vending machines, I simply have to rant and rave about how great they are. Everywhere I've ever been in Japan, even in parks, vending machines are omnipresent. You can buy soda, juice, beer, sake, rice, and more. I can't stress how incredibly convenient and cool it is to be able to buy a drink whenever you're thirsty without looking for a store (or in the middle of the night, when stores are closed). Machines that sell liquor turn themselves off around midnight, though. I wondered briefly why we couldn't have vending machines like this in the U.S., and quickly figured out that they'd simply be smashed to pieces by some loser.

The lineup for the night was Def Master, then Null and I, then Zeni Geva, then Cocobat and, headlining, Shellshock. I'm not sure why Zeni Geva didn't headline, except that the other bands have some affiliation with H.G. Fact, the label run by Tadashi Satoh, who organized the show. I'd exchanged let-

ters and singles with Satoh-san for a while, so it was nice to meet him in person. I also finally met Ide from ZK Records, and the members of Melt-Banana, who came to the U.S. later in the summer. Mayuko and Hiroshi from C.C.C.C. also showed up just as Null and I were starting our set. Shimizu from the Space Streakings came to give me a book,



"Marquee" sign at the doorway of Shinjuku Loft.

Bloody Ukiyo-e, which I saw on my last trip at Masami's (Merzbow) house. It's a big, beautiful collection of bloody pictures by both modern and traditional artists, including Hanawa and Maruo. I thought it was out of print, but I learned it has just been reprinted. Very exciting gift!

I expected to do a fairly subtle, laid-back sort of set, based on Null's recent recordings with Jims O'Rourke and Plotkin. So it surprised me that we got into a pretty harsh and noisy thing fairly quickly. Our set was short, somewhere around 15-20 minutes. Five bands played, and Satoh sort of slid our set into the lineup at the last minute as a favor, so that seemed a reasonable length. It was difficult for me to tell how successful the performance was, but folks seemed to like it. The crowd was pretty young, trendy, and rock'n'roll. At the end of the night several junior high girl groupies surrounded Null and talked to him. Dunno what they were saying, but everyone else thought they were pretty funny.

I packed up my stuff quickly after our set, then talked to Mayuko and Hiroshi. Mayuko said my guitar playing has gotten noisier. Dunno if that's good or not. We stuck around to see Zeni Geva's set, which was great. Eito has gotten better and better. Tabata was completely crazed, leaping in the air and doing somersaults. No wonder he tapes the strap to his guitar.

After Zeni Geva, Loren and I went to Mos Burger with Mayuko and Hiroshi to get some snacks and drinks. Mos Burger is a Tokyo chain selling chicken, thin burgers, fries and so forth. There are several chains like that around Japan, including First Kitchen. I found it interesting that those chains have English names, rather than Japanese. I suspect that fast food and America are inextricably linked in the eyes of the world. What a legacy... McDonalds seems to own the market as far as American burger imports go, though we saw plenty of KFCs and Taco Bells too. No Burger Kings, I guess.

I got what I thought was a pretty good payment for playing, but Satoh and Null apologized for it being so small. Hell, when I play in America, I'm lucky to get \$50 on a good night. After the show people were just going to hang around in the club and party, but Loren was still feeling pretty bad and we had a long drive ahead to get back to

Null's house, so we took off.

We woke up pretty late and watched some funny wrestling videos with Null and Eito, then hung out in Null's room for a while and listened to various CDs of traditional British music, which both Null and Loren really like. It's cool with me, but not necessarily my big passion. Loren was feeling better but still not perfect, so I went with Eito down to Family Mart and got her some juice — and myself an ice coffee — for breakfast.

Allow me to wax fondly about Japanese ice coffees, even those in cans. Somewhat similar to Vietnamese ice coffee, they make it with sweetened, condensed milk mixed in. Hence it's almost like a coffee milkshake, rather than your normal American bitter ice coffee. In somewhat fancier restaurants, they'll bring you the coffee with a tiny pitcher of cream and another tiny pitcher of liquid sugar, so you can sweeten it to your taste. Heavenly.

Early afternoon we hit the road again, and Eito drove us to Koenji, where the club Showboat is located, the site of the night's show. It's a pretty new club, run by the woman who used to run Gospel, where I played during my last visit with Torture Chorus. Showboat was a great club — another small basement, with a capacity of perhaps 100, and a really comfortable backstage area. Loren camped out back there for most of the evening. Mayuko and Hiroshi were there when we arrived, and the others came soon after. Null and Eito didn't stick around, since they don't care much for noise. Mayuko and Jojo went down the street with us to a coffee shop (amusingly named Bony Coffee) and we talked for a while.

Before the show, I set out the stuff I'd brought for sale: 7" singles and CDs. I was going to price the singles at about ¥500 (\$5) or so, but people told me that was too little! According to Mayuko, if they were priced too low, people would figure they weren't very good, so I priced them at ¥1000 as recommended.

The lineup for the night was Astro Black II (Mayuko and Hiroshi), then Jojo and I, Incapacitants, and finally Keiji Haino. Astro Black II was good; definitely a subset of C.C.C.C., but with a slightly dif-



The author on left, with Jojo at right, playing at Showboat in Koenji, Tokyo.

Photograph by Hiroshi Hasegawa

ferent feel. Maybe harder noise, less psychedelic, but still with an ever-changing mood. Jojo and I did a really great set. During sound-check it was loud enough that I decided to wear my ear plugs during our set, and I'm glad I did. The set was fairly long, over a half-hour; at one point Jojo collapsed next to his amp, then came roaring back. At another moment we matched his feedback to my E-bow and slide pitch, which wavered beautifully in the air. Very exciting. Incapacitants did a great theremin set, using little pocket theremins run through tons of effects! It's their new thing. Mayuko said they're called "the theremin brothers" now. The two of them furiously waving their hands around the theremin antennas amidst totally harsh noise is an amazing thing, both hilarious and imposing.

Haino's entrance during soundcheck was funny — all black clothing, black sunglasses, long black and gray hair, knee-high boots and a gold-topped cane. His performance was all percussion, no voice or guitar. They set up two microphones, and he swung bells, chimes, drums and other things through the air in a dance-like way, causing the sounds to phase between the two microphones. The beginning with the chimes was my favorite part, though later on when he was bowing and banging on a metal birdcage-like thing, the sound was wonderful as well.

Tons of friends came to the show: Ichiro of Dissecting Table; Masami and Reiko from Merzbow; the Ruins; Gomei from Pain Jerk; Ryuichi from C.C.C.C.; and others. Afterwards Loren told me that Yoshida introduced her to John Zorn, but I didn't even know he came to the show. Later, I sat backstage with Haino and his manager Jun Tanaka, and we talked a little bit. Haino was concerned about his upcoming shows with Faust, and asked some questions about San Francisco and Los Angeles.

After the show we all went down the street to a yakitori shop and chowed down. This is the best part about shows in Japan — they start at 7, end at 10, then everyone goes out to eat. Yakitori places are cool; everyone orders a couple of things, which are all appetizer-sized. When it comes, you grab whatever looks good. At the end of the night you divide up the bill. Loren just asked for some shabet. When it was served, Haino seemed to think it



The author spending another ¥110 in a vending machine, no doubt for one more can of ice coffee.

looked good, so he ordered some. I love the shu-mai and fried potatoes, as well as the yakitori. Most of the tofu-based things aren't to my taste.

After we ate and drank, we went with Jojo and Junko back to their apartment, which is right around the corner from Modern Music (headquarters of the P.S.F. label and an amazing record store) and right down the street from Jojo's sports card shop. It's a really nice apartment, small but not cramped. We watched a little television, which I think is al-

ways more entertaining in a language one doesn't understand. Jojo gave me the money for playing that night, which was much more than I expected. Plus I sold all of my 7" singles I'd brought, for ¥1000 (\$10) each! I felt wealthy. Junko set the electric carpet to a reasonable temperature, laid out a futon and blankets for us, and we fell asleep quickly.

We woke up and went down the street for breakfast with Jojo and Junko. We had toast, which was great. Loren and I fell in love with Japanese toast during our trip, even if that sounds weird. Each slice is cut 3 or 4 inches thick and toasted it lightly so it's really fluffy inside. Jojo and Junko took us to a cafe where they cut the toast around the inside of the crust and then into fourths, so you picked it up and sort of punched out the insides. Very classy.

Afterwards we stopped into Modern Music, also the headquarters of P.S.F. Records. I talked a little to Ikezumi about upcoming releases, and bought some good stuff. We spent the rest of the afternoon meeting with people, including the folks at I.D.N., who manage the Boredoms (and told us about the Lollapalooza dates); and Sakevi, vocalist of GISM, who wanted to talk about getting some records pressed up in the U.S. His apartment was very interesting — very American in a way, filled with books, posters, plastic monster figurines, and a big stereo system. He has all of the Re/Search books. He played some tapes of the stuff he wants to press 12" singles of, as well as some other material he's working on, which sounded excellent. He's doing a collaboration with Kitamura (of SSE Records and YBO²), which was wonderful dark, noisy stuff.

Later, we drove to Yokohama to meet up with

Courtyard of a Shinto shrine in Kamakura, with a statue of a god of Happiness in the back of the picture.



Mayuko and Hiroshi of C.C.C.C. for dinner. We met them at a cafe, and then went to Yokohama's Chinatown, which is apparently the largest Chinatown on the Pacific Rim outside China itself. It was beautiful, though it was raining so we didn't get to see very much. The food was good, though. After dinner, we went to Mayuko and Hiroshi's apartment, and slept.

In the morning the four of us took the train to Kamakura, and visited some temples. Hiroshi was born in Kamakura, so he knew his way around well. We toured through a few temples, as well as a tiny cemetery which was really nice. We got to see the giant buddha statue, and we went inside his stomach, too. Then we did a short tea ceremony, and went to a little restaurant for an excellent lunch. Loren and I both had tori-soba, which turned out to be duck, not chicken — not that it mattered, since it was beyond wonderful.

After lunch we returned to Yokohama and went to a doll museum, which was very cool. Tons of dolls from around the world, including (not surprisingly) a terrific collection of Japanese dolls, which were fascinating. Then we wandered along the Yokohama harbor-front park, and had a small snack at a fast-food restaurant, followed by a brief visit to a department store. The toy department was fun, and the electronics department was very interesting. I saw a new small digital micro-cassette — simply amazing. The cases were less than two inches in length for a 90 minute tape. The magazine department was insanely crowded with salarymen all standing in the aisles doing their after-work reading. We stopped into a small cafe for a break and I had an ice cocoa. It was like a cold hot chocolate, not like a milk-shake — no ice cream involved. Interesting. After we got back to their apartment Loren crashed and the other three of us stayed up until 2am talking.

In the morning, we went to Tokyu Hands, which is a "life store," of all things. It sells everything from

art supplies to some furniture, stationery, tools, kitchen supplies, and more. Mayuko took us there to buy some handmade Japanese paper for Loren. Then they put us on the train to Osaka. It was the *express shinkansen (hikari)*, which got us to Osaka in about three hours. Really

smooth, and comfortable, with attendants rolling food carts by periodically — the carts play music quietly as they go by, which was my favorite part. The countryside whizzed by pretty quickly. Each car had bathrooms at one end, with the sinks separate. We had reserved a non-smoking car, thankfully.

When we reached Osaka, Ryo met us on the platform, so we had no chance to get lost. We loaded our bags into her funny little jeep, and she drove us to their (Solmania's Ohno and hers) apartment. Their jeep is actually worth mention; its side windows are just clear plastic, and the doors don't lock. Yet they have a tape deck in it, and can leave things in the jeep without fear of it being stolen. Indicative of Japan's safety, relative to the U.S.

They had numerous cats, including a brand-new bunch of kittens (which they breed to sell). They put us into a room which is off-limits to the cats, though, which was cool since the male cat was spraying. Their apartment is quite nice and pretty large — two bedrooms plus the main room and kitchen area. The living room was filled with CDs and posters (including *A Clockwork Orange*), and the bathroom was decorated with more posters and weird little plastic toys. The apartment is on the seventh floor of the building, with a nice view from the covered walkway outside.

We left our stuff there and drove to Jojo's Osaka card shop, where Maso (aka Masonna) and Fusao (of Angel'in Heavy Syrup) were working. We made dinner plans with them, and then went shopping until Ohno finished working. Ryo took us to the Tower Records shop (huge, four floors of stuff), then Time Bomb (where I bought a Blood Thirsty Butchers CD for my friend Kevin), then King Kong. We were looking for a few things like the Japanese CD of the *Heavy Metal* soundtrack for a friend, but no luck. At King Kong, though, we happened to run

into Eye Yamatsuka (of the Boredoms) and Chew Hasegawa (of Omoide Hatoba), of all people. We talked for a little bit, then left them to go meet Ohno at his office.

We picked up Maso and Fusao, and went out for miso, which was excellent: over a burner set into our tabletop, we had a huge bowl of miso broth, into which we dumped noodles and meat to cook. We had fun trying to communicate, as always.

Afterwards we went back and did some laundry, since they thankfully had a washer and dryer. Many folks have washers, but most seem to hang their laundry to dry on their balconies.

Ryo dropped us off at the train station in the morning. Loren and I took the shinkansen to Hiroshima by ourselves. It only took about two hours. We wandered around the Hiroshima train station in confusion for a little while, and finally found an office where we could get a tourist map.

We figured out the streetcar pretty easily, and took it to the atomic dome (*genbaku domu*). That's the building that they left standing in ruins after the bomb. It's a pretty impressive (and sobering) sight. We looked at lots of memorial statues, and took some pictures, then visited the Peace Museum. That was a really intense experience — short film loops that the U.S. Army took after the surrender, pieces of children's bloody clothing, piles of melted bottles...

There were lots of school children in the museum on field trips, and the strangest thing happened: a small group of boys, about ten years old, came up to me; after an awkward moment one brave boy stuck out his hand for me to shake. I smiled and did so, and then the others crowded around and shook my hand too. I don't know if they just learned about how Americans shake hands and wanted to try it, or if there was a deeper meaning. Loren and I were definitely the youngest Americans there — there were a few others, but they seemed to be middle-aged vacationing couples. It was a funny experience, anyway, and somehow cheering after the intensity of the museum itself.

After looking around some more, we wandered



The atomic dome (genbaku domu) in Hiroshima.

down the main street but didn't see any restaurants, so we took the streetcar back to the train station and ate there. I managed to get us reserved seats on a train back to Osaka, speaking in Japanese — a triumph for language studies. We ate and got back to Osaka with nary a flail. Ryo met us at the train station and took us back to their apartment, then left us there to wait for Ohno because she had to go to work. Apparently she sometimes works with her mother at a bar or something, though she also works telling fortunes.

When Ohno got back he took us down the street to eat an Osaka specialty, *okonomiyaki*. It's like an omelet with meat and a sweetish soy flavor, sort of. Excellent stuff. Then we picked up some drinks and rented a video, the sequel to "Wicked City," one of our favorite anime. This one was called "Demon City: Shinjuku," and wasn't quite as cool as the first one, but still good. All in Japanese, of course, but that didn't bother us too much. Ohno and I stayed up talking about distortion boxes, guitars, languages, education and other things.

After we were all awake the next morning, Loren and I went with Ohno to Kyoto, where we met up with Akifumi Nakajima (aka Aube and head of the G.R.O.S.S. label), dressed stylishly in all black with sunglasses and a Die Form t-shirt. He took us around through some of the old parts of the city, and to a number of shrines and temples. We visited the Heian Shrine, one of the more famous (and large) shrines with an amazing garden. It being the weekend, though, it was fairly crowded in many of the places. Ginkakuji, the Silver Pavilion, was particularly nice, with a gorgeous garden. It was a very hot day, so it was nice to stop for lunch: a good soba and rice plate with one of the peculiar and great Japanese drinks, a "lemon squash" — the most lemony soda I've ever had.

We took a break at Nakajima's house, in an old section of Kyoto. The city of Kyoto is celebrating 1200 years of history this year, to put that in per-

*Garden of the
Heian Shrine in
Kyoto.*



spective. His family's house used to be a storefront with a sliding door on the street, but what used to be the shop is his room now. It's totally filled with records and tapes and recording equipment, with barely

room for two chairs and a loft bed. Amazing.

When we got back to Osaka, Ohno had to go to rehearsal for Folk Tales, so Loren took a nap while I relaxed for a while reading. Shohei Iwasaki (aka Monde Bruits) stopped by later and we went out for dinner. We had a good dinner down the street; talk was slow since his English is bad and my Japanese is awful, but it was still fun and interesting. A while after we returned to the apartment, Ohno got back, and I finally left them still talking when I crashed at 2am.

The next day begin with perhaps the first lazy morning in Japan; we slept in pretty late; even Loren, who usually woke up early to write. Eventually around 12:30 we went out shopping. We stopped at Forever Records, where I talked to owner Satoru Higashiseto a bit, then we went to Comic Land and found some Maruo and Hanawa books, as well as the best find, a book of tarot cards by Yoshitaka Amano. From there to Les Disques du Soleil and I bought some cassettes by Seed Mouth, K. Mizutani, and others. We tried to locate Treville books and some cassette index cards, but no luck. We did find some cheap t-shirts for friends (and ourselves), though, on the way to Sam &

Shoei's (Japan Overseas) apartment, where we were spending the night. For dinner we went out for *yaki-niku*, basically Korean-style bbq. Shoei just ordered a variety of meats for us, which we cooked ourselves on a grill in the

middle of the table. It was great.

Sam had to teach English in the morning and early afternoon, so Loren and I took the subway to Osaka Castle (*osaka-jo*). We managed to find it from the subway station, and we went all the way up to the top this time (during my last visit, Sam and I just wandered around the castle grounds). The museum was fairly interesting, with some old helmets and armor. The view from the top is really great; it's weird to be atop this really old castle, with a moat around it, gazing down on skyscrapers and office buildings not far away.

After we got back from the castle, we ate at the Chinese restaurant run by Shoei's mother. Then we took a short walk to a grocery store nearby and spent about half an hour looking at all the strange candy and other stuff. We took our goodies up to Sam & Shoei's roof and talked until it was time to go to Bears for the sound check. It took us about 20 minutes to walk to the club with Sam (Ohno brought my equipment from



*View from the top of
Osaka Castle (*osaka-jo*), with the "fabled
dolphin-like fish" in
the foreground and
skyscraper office
buildings in the
distance.*

The author at left, with Sam on the right, playing at Bear's in Osaka.

his apartment, since he was driving), with a brief detour through a tiny shrine.

Sound check took a bit longer than usual, because we had a problem with Sam's drums (with pachinko balls inside some of them) causing interference, or feeding back through my guitar for some reason. Got it straightened out, though. Ohno had stayed up all night finishing his new guitar, which was worth the wait — awesome. Two necks, one in each direction, with a steel plate in the middle keeping the strings taut, and a built-in microphone and mini-mixer.

Aube played first, and Nakajima did about a 15-minute set of steadily-building layered noise. Very nice. Christine 23 Onna were second; this time Maso, Fusao and Jojo, doing a Faust cover. Fusao kept a steady tom/snare rhythm, while Maso did synth and Jojo of course did guitar noise. They started out fairly calm, and then slowly deconstructed it into noise, with both Maso and Jojo screaming into mics and making noise. Slow but fun. Maso ended up throwing his keyboard onto the stage by the end.

Our set as Trance was me on guitar, Ohno on his new super-guitar, and Sam on drums. I also had some drums set up and played them off and on, while letting my guitar feed back at the same time, looped through the sampler pedal. It worked out fairly well, though listening to the recording I think Ohno's amp should have been louder. Lots of people came to the show, including David Hopkins (Public Bath Records), Mine & Mineko from Angel'in Heavy Syrup, Higashiseto, Iwasaki, and others. I met two Americans: a friend of Sam's named Jeff, and Matt, the publisher of Exile magazine.

Of course we went out for food and drinks after the show. Loren finally tried some sake (with David's recommendation) — good and cold, in a little glass which sat in a square wooden coaster-thing with cold water in it to help chill the



sake. Snazzy. When we were done it was raining, so we got a cab back to Sam's place. The first one David tried to hail didn't stop, which apparently they're not allowed to do. But dealing with *gaijin* in the rain was too much for the guy, I suppose.

We got going pretty late the next day. Sam accompanied us to the train station, where we found our shinkansen without incident, and rode back to Yokohama. Mayuko met us there with Null, and we went back to Mayuko's apartment where Null made us a great curry dinner. Nice and spicy, quite impressive. Loren napped on the sofa (too much beer) while the rest of us talked about music and noise topics. She got up again in time to drink some sake with Null before he caught the train home.

Mayuko and Hiroshi helped us carry our bags to the train station, and Mayuko rode with us out to the airport. Once there, we stopped in a restaurant and had a good (though expensive) lunch, before we had to leave to get through customs and everything else. The flight went with no problem, and we arrived home safely to find everything shipshape, including our cat. In some ways it was nice to be home, and it really does take a lot of energy to get around in a place where you don't know the language much, and can't even read most signs. Still, we've got so many friends there, and it's such a great place, that I know I'll be going back as soon as I can afford it.



Masahiko Ohno, aka Solmania, with his new dual-neck super-guitar.

K2 LABORATORY

Seeking the Truth

via

NOISE

K2 is the solo project of Kimihide Kusafuka, a noise artist who has been keeping a relatively low profile until recently due to his being forced to take a break for several years. Early in 1994 I received a copy of his latest release, the "Metaloplakia" CD, on his own Kinky Musik Institute label. Intrigued, I wrote back for more information, and received copies of some of his earlier cassettes, which are equally interesting. Becoming active with a vengeance now, K2 has many releases planned soon, including "Noise Tournament Vol 1," a 7" EP collaboration with the Haters, and "Noise Tournament Vol 2" with De Fabriek; also, the "Maximum Lateral Pressure" cassette to be released by Realization Recordings. In response to some questions, Kimihide was kind enough to reply at length, as follows.

It is interesting that you find both music and science just different ways to "the truth." Do you think one way is better than the other? What are the differences?

I think that both music and science aim at discovering the truth, though these ways have different passways, approaches, and/or points of view. The truth is a thing for which all people search, and which is very difficult to get. Science is a more social way of doing it, while music is a more artistic way.

For example, in the medical science, it is important to elucidate the mechanism of genesis about one disease: cancer, atherosclerosis, or other diseases. Medical science aims at it. For that, medical scientists have been studying using several scientific techniques, including histology, statistics, biology, physiology, or gene engineering. I am a pathologist, and at the same time, a non-professional musician, too. Therefore, I adapt scientific ways against music; noise composition is to design an experiment, playing is to do the experiment designed, recording is to write the scientific thesis, and live performance is to read a paper on the scientific results. These are quite equivalent for me. Therefore, I use several materials and techniques in music composition and recording. For me, noise is a metaphor of the science.

With science, do you think it's easier to know when you have discovered a "truth"?

Science is objective. In it, all results are produced as numbers or objective data. This process is controlled by strict rules, which is the so-called "scientific" way: design, materials and methods, experiments, results, and discussion. Therefore, scientific results and findings are easier to be recognized by most people. However, science has a more fragile structure. All scientific results are limited by its own "scientific" or strict assay systems. These assay systems were decided conveniently by human beings,

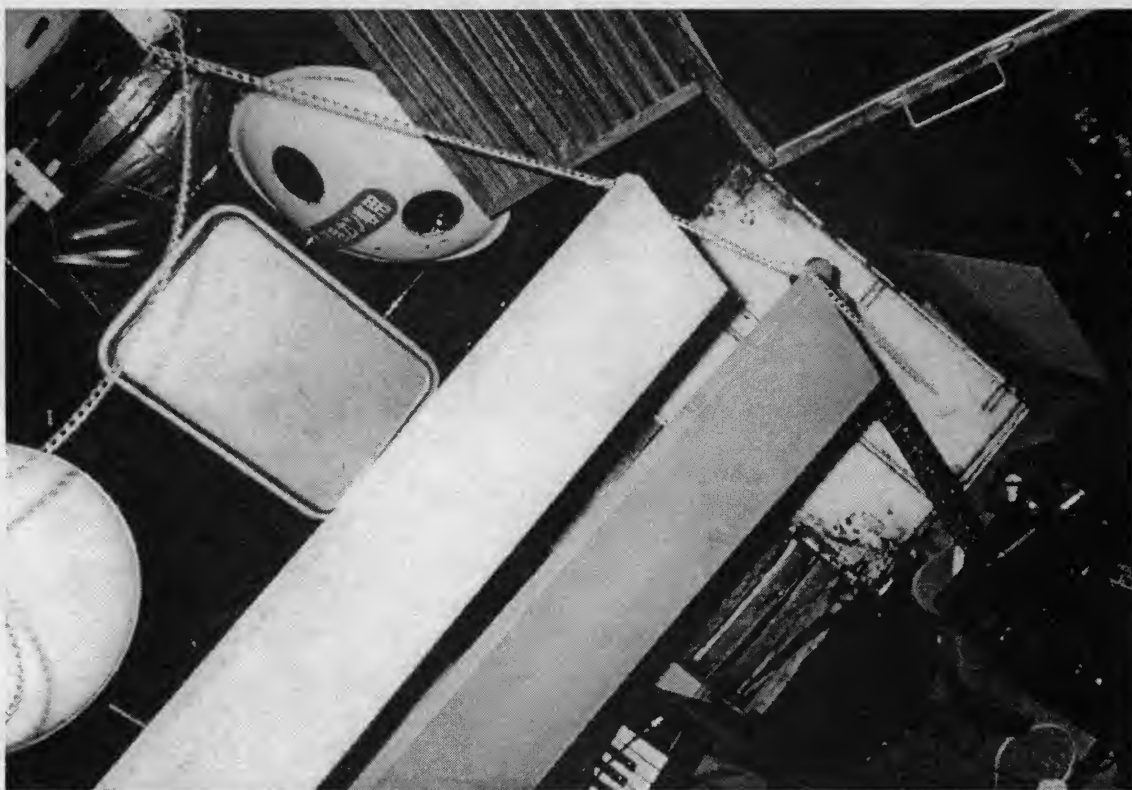
though all phenomena of life may yield independently on understanding of human beings. An assay system is a pitfall in science. Most scientists may not become aware of this trap. I have more interests in the plain truth, which may be unable to be experienced through

only the scientific way. I think that science is an easier way for it than music, but at the same time, it has the possibility of blind belief. We have to take care of the "scientific" way.

You say that K2's "music" or "noise" is a kind of experiment — do you record your noise with specific goals or effects? Do you record a piece of noise expecting it to have a particular effect?

Yes. I think that K2's noise musik has special effects for some listeners. I have been recording my noise musik with particular effects, which function through the acoustic organs against the listeners' subconsciousness. My noise musik is produced through the similar way with scientific experiment;

idea & design, play, trial & error, results, and discussion. My noise musik is spiritual and psychological experiment. This concept is influenced by C.G. Jung. Of course, this way is not subliminal effects. My concept, "musikalchemy," aims to acoustic psychology, and is related to realization of collective subconsciousness. It is done through making K2's noise musik. Both collective subconsciousness and noise are very chaotic, but if they function well, we can metamorphose, and we can get parts of the truth. Therefore, K2's noise musik is produced along the chaos, which is accidental silence and accidental noise.



You say that most listeners don't feel comfortable or good. Do you care about how listeners feel? Is there something different about listeners who do feel comfortable with K2's noise? Have they metamorphosed already?

In general, noise music, not ambient, or not industrial rock, is uncomfortable music for most listeners who have not listened to noise music until now. Although noise, including factories, cars, cans, birds, or shatters, is popular in daily life, noise music is not popular in personal appearance. Noise is "materia," and noise music is one of the metamorphosed "materias." Some listeners may feel comfortable with noise music. However, it cannot be said that they have already metamorphosed. Metamor-

phosis may emerge from deep insight and realization of the collective subconsciousness. Some listeners may notice it. If they notice it through K2's noise musik, I will be very happy. Because it is one of my purposes in the relation with noise musik. I make my noise musik for myself, or in order to metamorphose myself.

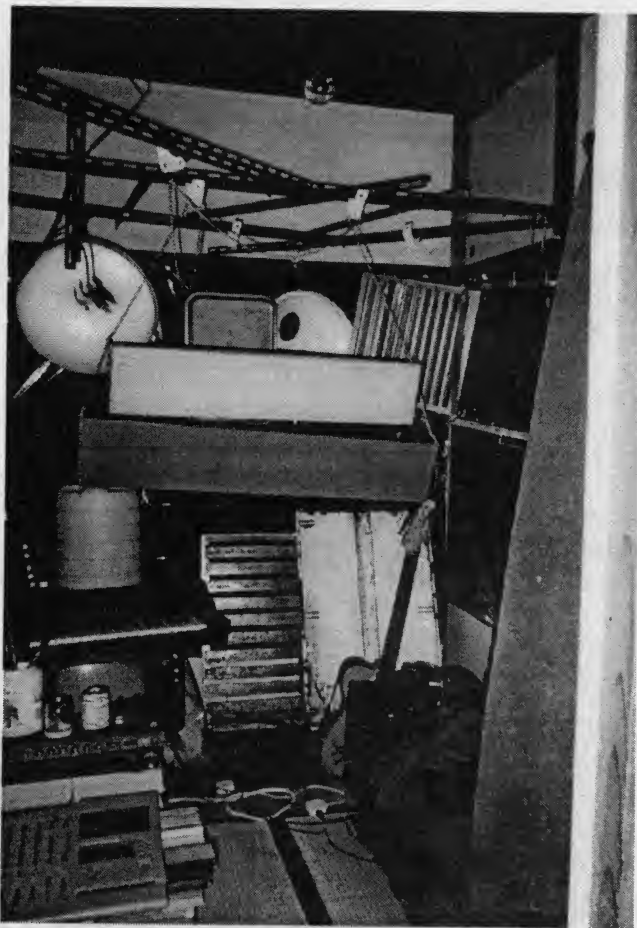
You stopped K2 for some years while you were studying, then you started again in 1993. Is your recording very different now than it was before your studies?

No, I think there's no essential difference between early K2 and current K2, except to the recording technique and machines. I like electronics and metal junk noise. The current K2 makes elaborate and bold noise works through many instruments, including metal junk percussions, cheap electronics, and processors.

I consider that originality is not important. Therefore, K2 has several styles including power electronics, metal junk noise, to musique concrete, with strong rhythm or no rhythm. Noise music is chaos of sounds and, at the same time, chaos of styles, or chaos of concepts.

How do you make your recordings? What instruments, materials, do you use?

I use 8 tracks and 4 tracks recorder, 4 channel mixer, analog and digital synthesizer, digital sampler, numerous metal junks, digital processor, and several analog effectors. I consider that mixing is part of playing, so that my room studio Oncosonik Laboratory, including multitrack recorder, is a very important instrument for me. Also, I am devoted to metal junk noise: banging, creaking, and scratching of metals. My first CD named "Metaloplakia," is produced from metal junk, rhythm machine, and electronics. My recent tape named "De Novo" is recorded by pure metal-scratching method only, and my newest tape named "Maximum Lateral Pressure,"

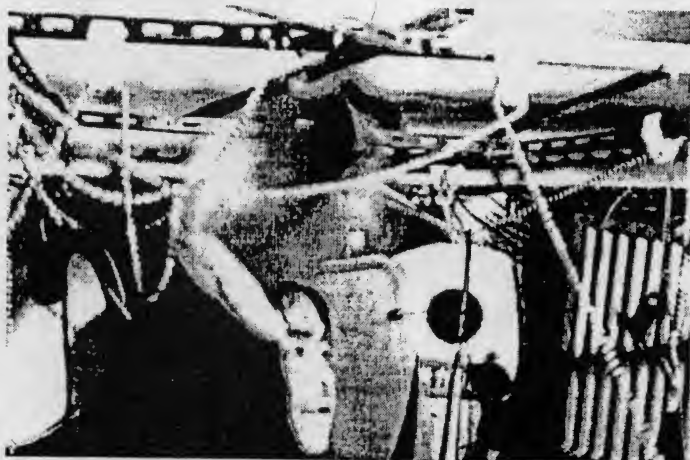


which was issued by Realization Recordings in October, is produced from metal junk noise and digital/analog processors (loop machine).

You have tapes by other groups available from Kinky Musik Institute. Do you plan CDs by other groups? How do you get in contact with groups like U.G.A.S., Papa's Murder, etc?

No, I will not plan CD publication by other groups. Kentaro Sawano of The Bikini Pigs and Spot on Panties, and Yuji Asakura of Papa's Murder are my old friends. I have played rhythm box and organ in early Bikini Pigs. I am the first and original member of Papa's Murder, with Yuji Asakura. U.G.A.S. is another new project by Yuji Asakura, which uses loop only and issued a reconstructed montage-loop cassette. However, now, I have no contact with Kentaro Sawano, because The Bikini Pigs and Spot on Panties are more usual junk bands for me. Although Papa's Murder is loop and collage unit, I have no contact. Because they start their own label, I have not supported them.

Now, I am planning collaboration through the mail project named Versus Product Series. Already, collaboration 7" EPs between K2 and the Haters,



and between K2 and De Fabriek will be issued in Autumn. Both are 500 limited editions. At the present, except to the above, I am collaborating with Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock, and RLW (of P16.D4) too.

Kinky Musik Institute
c/o Kimihide Kusafuka
K2FLAT 102, 1-15-11 Osu
Ichikawa-shi, Chiba 272
Japan

Kinky Musik Institute releases

- KMI-001 K2 "Materia Informis" C-46
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- KMI-003 The Bikini Pigs "Hawaiian Speed" C-46
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- KMI-009 Spot on Panties "Panties go to the West" C-46
- KMI-010 K2 "Tekhnodrug" C-60
- KMI-011 U.G.A.S. "Minimal Change" C-46
- KMI-012 K2 "Metaloplakia" CD (ltd. ed. of 300)
- KMI-013 K2 "De Novo" C-46
- KMI-014 U.G.A.S. forthcoming loop cassette (ltd. ed. of 38 handmade)

Earlier K2 tapes are also available, KTC-01 through KTC-12.

K2

"De Novo"

Cassette, Kinky Musik Institute, KMI-013

The latest self-released cassette, this is a two-part construction made using metal and effects, with occasional vocals as well, if I'm not mistaken. As the liner says, "All titles by metal scratching; no synthesizer and no overdubbing" — but it's plenty heavy and intense. Screeching, scraping, scratching, banging, slamming, and every other method is used to mistreat pieces of metal. There are dynamics, with quieter moments that are no less intense, because you know that any



moment, something is going to happen, and soon enough it does, with a bang. One might expect that a 46-minute tape of only metal might grow tiring, but surprisingly it doesn't. If spending a day in a construction yard filled with metal and a dozen crazed workers with destruction on their minds sounds appealing (it does to me), check out this tape as soon as you can.

K2

"Maximum Lateral Pressure"

Cassette, Realization Recordings

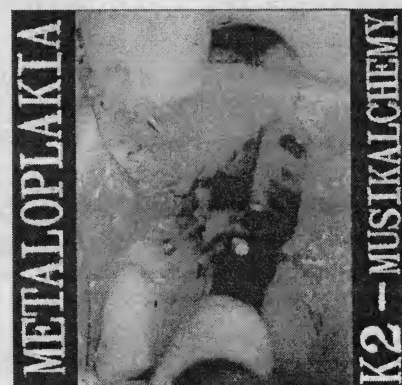
This new cassette from K2 is two long parts, each one side of the tape. The first side includes tracks which were also used in K2's collaboration with Runzelstirn & Gurgelstock, while the second side includes tracks used in collaboration with the Haters, as well as some pieces from the "Metaloplakia" CD. These recordings see K2 branching out and using violin, clarinet, and voice as well as the usual metals and electronics. The vocal elements in particular are an interesting addition — not words or singing, mind you, but more like the groans and cries of damned souls. Much of this contains K2's trademarked "huge factory" sound style, in which metals clash, electronics whoosh, and it sounds like you're in a hell constructed from a gigantic metal foundry or automobile assembly plant. This would be a fine alternate soundtrack for the "Tetsuo" films.

K2

"Metaloplakia"

CD, Kinky Musik Institute, KMI-012

A nice even ten pieces of...well, something that lies in the limbo between noise and not-noise. The liner notes claim that it's "the true metal machine musik" that "includes the taste of metal on the tongue, or the visions where old-fashioned machineries (sic) are running in the ruins." That works, but you'll have to take the remaining notes with a grain of salt as they compare the work to *E s p l e n d o r G e o m e t r i c o , M e r z b o w , W h i t e h o u s e* and *N e u b a u t e n* in a rather self-aggrandizing manner. In any case, Mr Kimihide Kusafuka uses *m e t a l s , e l e k t r o n i x , r h y t h m - m a c h i n e ,* and processor to create some pretty nightmarish sounds. "Ironoklast" has a distant machine-rhythm pumping away, buried beneath loads of metallic



ringings and distorted sounds. The result does resemble being in the middle of a factory that's rebelled against its operators, and wants revenge. There is a definite Esplendor Geometrico influence at work here, evidenced by the tendency to pin down each track with a noisy, metallic rhythm over which he constructs lattices of scraped metals and waves of distorted electronics. The work overall would be more comparable to EG and Einsturzende Neubauten than to Merzbow or other "pure" noise artists; early Dissecting Table might be another point of reference. I like this a lot; it has a primitive energy to it, and is coming from an area which I feel has been sadly neglected as of late. It's all too easy for artists in this area to cross a line and begin creating dance music, which has left few people working with harsher sounds and rhythms. Definitely worth investigating if this piques your curiosity.

K2

"Tekhnodrug"

Cassette, Kinky Musik Institute, KMI-010

This cassette holds four pieces of "Musikalchemy" as the liner says, created using "elektronix, MTR, modulation." The opening work, "Aural Infektion," begins with high-pitched electronic tones and harsh textures, which appear intermittently and arrhythmically. Scraping and saw-like sounds are also used. The result is something like an alarm siren at a construction site; not very harsh, really, actually a nice noisy listen. "Drug for Tekhnokrat" is a rumbling noisescape punctuated by tinny distorted tones, and fast, heavy metallic percussion rhythms. Side B begins with "Tekhnodrug," a collage of ringing metallic sounds, with quiet, droning moments. "Aural Injektion" is the final track, a dense collection of electronic synth noises, tones, and clattering, clicking sounds; it's like being inside a tunnel with a train that's breaking down. Solid, interesting noisy works that affect, but don't grate.



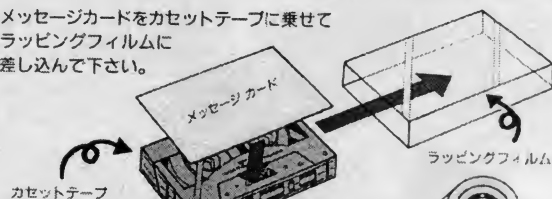
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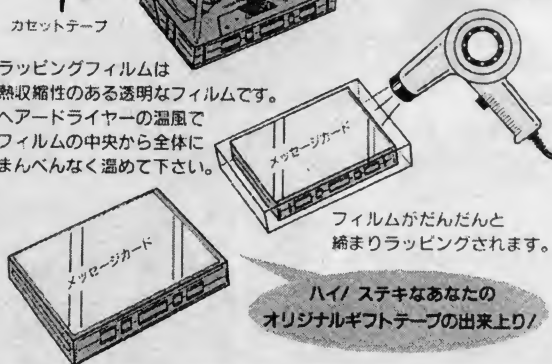


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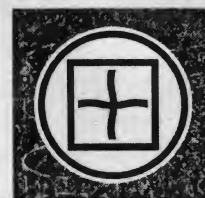
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KINGDOM OF NOISE

Presented by Charnel Music & the Thirsty Swede

Fri, Oct 14

Masonna

Poo Poo Bomb

Slumberfoot

Deerhoof

Sat, Oct 15

Solmania

Daniel Menche

Trance

Crawl Unit

Sun, Oct 16

Steelpole Bathtub

Borbetomagus

Masonna

Solmania

Tue, Oct 18

Borbetomagus

Crawling with Tarts

Sufi Mind Game

Oct 14, 15, 18

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Oct 16

Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell, S.F.

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KINGDOM OF NOISE

SAN FRANCISCO NOISE FESTIVAL

In October of '94 a group of us organized the first Kingdom of Noise festival here in San Francisco. It was planned around the appearance of Japanese noise artists Masonna and Solmania, as well as the first West Coast appearances by infamous sax-guitar terrorists Borbetomagus. The festival ended up being four nights at two different clubs. Haight Street's Thirsty Swede, thanks to booker Alicia Rose, was the center of activity, and the enormous and beautiful Great American Music Hall hosted one evening of gigantic noisemaking.

Friday, October 14 opened things up. Deerhoof, comprised of a drummer and a bass player, jerked their way through a set of spasmodic material. They alternated quiet moments with intense freakouts; the drummer's falsetto singing added an interesting element. Slumberfoot was made up of the two

guitarists from local rock outfit Bakamono, and they exuded a wall of buzzing and shrieking tones and feedback. Their set was very short and interesting, though they seemed less than satisfied. Poo Poo Bomb, the messy noise ensemble headed by Torture Chorus veteran Stephen Holman, were up next. At this show their lineup had Stephen doing his ranting and raving; Josephine handling the multi-track and toy electronics noisemaking; and ex-Ethyl Meatplow dude John Napier with

his trusty Moog Liberation. The resulting cacophony mixed performance-art rantings with heavily rhythmic noise a la Esplendor Geometrico, and blating, droning, wavering synth spewings. Good stuff.

Then headliner Masonna was on. Maso had two amplifiers set up; one for a contact mic'ed container of coins, and one for a contact mic'ed piece of sheet metal which was taped to a mic stand. Each of course ran through a string of effects pedals. As soon as he took the stage, he proceeded to stomp around, flinging the sheet metal around; holding the coin canister in his fist, he shook it and screamed into it. Waves of vibrating feedback and distorted screams assaulted the audience. He kicked the sheet



Masonna hurling metal sheet during Thirsty Swede show.
Still from video by Fusao Toda



Above: Masonna making feedback adjustments; Below, the calm sound-check before the noise storm.
 Photos by Chris Arnold





which I managed to lose several layers of skin from my hand, and Elden broke four more keys on his keyboard. Daniel Menche, down from Portland, then regaled the audience with 45 minutes of dense, harrowing noise using a table-full of effects units, some stones, and other sound sources. An impressive wall of organic, shifting noises.

Headliner Solmania, aka Masahiko Ohno, had brought his double-necked guitar, which I first saw while playing with him in Osaka in the spring. This was the first time he'd had it over here, and everyone was appropriately impressed by its appearance. We only had two amplifiers for him to use, but nonetheless he was able to create an impressive array of boom-

Left: Masonna hurling himself backwards into the Thirsty Swede audience; Below, Maso preaches from atop an upside-down table.

Photos by Chris Arnold



metal, knocked it over, and dragged it around, making the amp emit heavy destructive tones. Maso grabbed the table from the back of the stage and jumped on top of it, fell over, turned it upside down and jumped on top of the base. Screaming from atop it, he fell off onto the stage, then tried to throw the table into the audience but it was too heavy. Failing that, he threw himself into the audience, repeatedly, screaming all the while into the contact mic'ed coin canister. Then, after about 10 minutes, it was all over. The audience was stunned, laughing, and satisfied.

Saturday, October 15, Sacramento's Crawl Unit opened the evening with an elaborate setup of modified guitar and electronics. The sounds were layered; I could see him manipulate the guitar, and not always hear directly, but always feel, the difference it made in the noise. The multiple layers of emanating sound were very interesting. My own project, Trance, was next. I manned the guitar noise while Elden M. (of Allegory Chapel Ltd.) joined me on keyboard. It was a satisfying set, in



Solmania's Masahiko Ohno wrings noise from his customized guitar.
Photo by Chris Arnold

ing, squeaking, wailing noise. Due perhaps to over-exuberance, Ohno managed to trash his effects pedals sufficiently to disrupt the connections and his sound, so his set was only 25 minutes or so of high-intensity output, but that got the job done.

Sunday, October 16 was the "big night" at the Great American Music Hall. Due to the size of the place, it required new tactics from Masonna, so we went out prior to sound check and he bought a wireless unit, promising new

heights of audience interaction. He had also grabbed a box from my garage filled with broken CD jewel cases... Solmania's set was first, and with a full four amplifiers at his disposal, he was a big hit with the audience, if not the sound-man. It was a great display of looped, distorted, pitch-shifted and otherwise massively fucked-up guitar noise, augmented by his guitar's built-in microphone which he screamed into.

Masonna, next, hit the stage and started yelling and making a

general din. Then he grabbed the box of jewel boxes, jammed a contact mic into it, and shook it, finally just throwing it across the stage. Then suddenly, with a handful of effects and his coin canister, he took off over the side of the stage and was out in the audience. Much to the bemusement of the crowd, he continued shrieking and shaking the coins, messing with the effects, and generally making a hell of a racket. Back on the stage, then off again, and I saw him hit the banister on stage right, which toppled under him. He tried to grab it (to drag it with him?), but a bouncer took it from him. He actually bruised himself up pretty badly on the banister, so after a final on-stage bout of screaming, he was gone.

Borbetomagus, with a stage-full of saxophones, were up next. Donald Miller sat in a chair with his prepared guitar, laying down a bed of rumbles and squeaks over which Jim Sauter and Don Deitrich squawked and shrieked their special brand of saxophone torture. Using effects as well as their patented "bells together" method, they created a most impressive wall of noise.

Steelpole Bathtub, who due to their love of weird sounds were happy to lend their draw to this



Solmania attacks his guitar.
Still from video by Maso

evening (thus making it possible to get the lesser-known noisemakers into the Great American), headlined. They played their cool combination of rock and experimentation, adding strange sounds from tape and indulging in occasional spacey guitar-and-bass noise drones.

Tuesday, October 18 was the final night, beginning with Sufi Mind Game. Comprised of two ex-members of Portland's Hitting Birth, they started early so they could play two long sets of trance-inducing guitar noise and drumming. At times the drummer would leave the kit and vocalise most effectively over Steve's unique guitar drones. Crawling with Tarts, local favorites, next contributed one of their operas, using turntables and carefully-choreographed selections from their collection of weird records. As usual it was an educational and enjoyable collection of unique sounds, with some particularly effective crescendos. And lastly, Borbetomagus closed the Kingdom of Noise with an even more physical noise experience than Sunday's show. I felt that although their sound was suitably huge at the Great American Music Hall, the smaller confines of the Thirsty Swede allowed their sound a greater muscularity and in-your-face presence. In any case, it was a particularly transcendent experience.





OMOIDE HATOBABA

Interview by Dan Kletter & Mason Jones
Photos by Mari Kono

Omoide Hatoba are a three-piece band from Osaka, Japan. They are: Chu Hasegawa on Kung-Fu drums, Atsushi Tsuyama on beer-bottle slide bass and Seiichi Yamamoto playing freaked-out guitars. In addition to this regular line-up, Omoide Hatoba like to have other musicians make guest appearances on their recordings.

If ever an interview could have had the theme "spontaneous," this was it. I should have known I was doomed. It happened like this: while we were driving to a wedding, the conversation eventually came around to the upcoming Omoide Hatoba shows. One thing led to another and—

I suddenly realized that Mason had just very casually suggested that I should interview them before the show. OK, yeah... I could do that. A few more moments passed as my brain registered the concept. No, really! I could do this...

Later on that week, I scrambled to make arrangements for a friend of mine who speaks Japanese to help translate. On the night of their first show, we all converged on Merchant's in Oakland. In keeping with the mood of spontaneity, the batteries in Mason's DAT recorder chose to give up the ghost just as the interview began. To make matters worse, I was so caught up with worrying about how things would turn out that I temporarily lost my sense of humor.

Looking back on it, that was just totally silly. Here we were, all packed into a mini-van, and I'm worried about asking the important questions! As the interview progressed I could see I was losing control of the situation. The conversation itself had taken a turn away from the neat and linear fashion that one comes to expect during interviews. Finally, Yamamoto clued me into planet Earth when he refused to answer anymore "serious" questions.

I am completely indebted to Mason for furiously scribbling out notes which I would later use to jog my memory of the events. I also want to thank Ako Nakamura for agreeing to come down on a work night and help me translate during the interview.

What is the history of Omoide Hatoba?

YAMAMOTO: We formed the group 7 years ago when Tsuyama and I met at CBGBs in Kyoto. Chu joined the group later, introduced by Eye Yamatsuka.

TSUYAMA: It was very spontaneous.

Y: Next question, please.

CHU: What we mean is... We feel that the history is very complicated.

Y: It could take almost the entire time we have for this interview to explain.

There is a CBGBs in Japan?

Y: Yes, but it is not connected with CBGB in New York.

C: They simply used the name because they liked it.

I have been told that the name, Omoide Hatoba, roughly translated means "memories of the bridge." What is the meaning behind such a name?

Y: Actually, it means "harbor of memories." (laughter) The name is a sort of an absurd joke. In Japanese *enka* music (traditional folk music), words like "memory" and "harbor" are used very frequently in song titles because they're evocative words. Putting these two words

*"I play drums with the
same spirit of Bruce Lee:
Kung-Fu"*

*"I play drums with the
same spirit of Bruce Lee:
Kung-Fu"*

*"I play drums with the
same spirit of Bruce Lee:
Kung-Fu"*

*"I play drums with the
same spirit of Bruce Lee:
Kung-Fu"*

together makes it a nonsense name. It's just like the music... Putting together common elements to create something strange.

What are some of your influences?

Y: I like Devo!

(laughing) Devo?

Y: Yes... and the Shaggs.

C: Bruce Lee! I play drums with the same spirit of Bruce Lee: *Kung-Fu*.

T: (laughing) Peter Baumann... Also Naomi Uemura. He was a very close friend and a famous mountain climber. He died climbing Mt. McKinley in Alaska.

When did he die?

T: About 5 or 6 years ago.

I know that Yamamoto is now a member of Boredoms. Are there any other projects or bands that the rest of you are involved with?

C: DMV, but we recently broke up. Also Concrete Octopus with Eye.

T: I have a band called Continental Man vs. Mountain Range Woman, with Yoshida and Masuda from the Ruins.

Y: I'm involved with 23 bands, all of which are equally important. They include Boredoms and Dendoba (Electric Teeth)

with Eye, Yoshimi, and Ohno, doing scum rock.

The first time I ever heard anything by Omoide Hatoba was when I listened to Daiongaku, and I was very moved by it. What I like best are the guitar riffs... The music is punctuated by these tight, repetitive chord structures that you come up with. They are so well designed. I ended up humming them all day long!

Y: Thank you for such a nice complement.

I just had to say that... What does Daiongaku mean?

Y: "Daiongaku" means "big music" (dai=big, ongaku=music)

Can you tell us about how you come up with the songs you are going to record?

C: We create the atmosphere first.

Y: We get together and just jam.

C: The rest is an industrial top secret. (laughs)

Um, so then are your live performances all improvised?

Y: It's difficult to define how much is improvisation, because we just wait and see what the circumstances are that day.

T: We play based on how we feel at the time.

Y: Yes. Nothing is determined, and that's very important to us. *Who does the artwork for your albums?*

Y: I do. It's all photo collages. I also write the liner notes. We find, and then modify pictures using a top secret process. (laughter) *OK, tell me... What can you see from your apartment windows?*

Y: (laughing) A

tennis court belonging to my Y a k u z a neighbors!

C: An elementary school.

T: A wall next door. (everyone laughs)

And as kids, what were your ambitions?

C: I wanted to be like my granddad. A cool, gray-haired old guy. This dream has not changed.

T: An Olympic athlete.

What kind of athlete?

T: Running. I still want to do this.

C: He runs a lot from his neighbors! (laughing)

Y: I wanted to be a banker, because I love money.

Is this true?

Y: Yes, my ultimate purpose is money.

What were your nicknames as kids?

Y: Zeni Geva!

T: (laughing) He was such a money-grubber!

C: Koke. It comes from the verb *kokeru*, which means to fall down. I would often be running in the house and not pay attention to what was in front of me. Y: He would often spontaneously fall down.

T: Mine was *Dorogame*. It's like a slow-moving mud turtle. This is because of my attitude.

How did you come to have David (of Public Bath Records) work with you on your albums?

Y: We like to have English vocals. It gives things an international flavor. So, I just asked him to sing. And actually, the piece



on *Daiongaku* is all improvised. David is very good with that.

Did he also improvise the songs he sang on Black Hawaii?

Y: I wanted him to sing something in a style he wasn't familiar with. I told him to pretend he was a rapper and to do something with a hip-hop flavor.

T: We liked the results of that song very much.

Are there any other projects or bands that you would like to work with or on?

C: It's mostly a secret.

Y: We have a goal to create 100 CDs.

Why 100?

Y: It's important to reach 100, especially for Tsuyama, because when he was a child 100 was the largest number he could imagine.

Will all of these CDs be released by Warner?

Y: No... To be released by any record company who wants to help us meet this goal. Our contract with Warner is limited to one release at this time.

What upcoming releases can we expect?

Y: There will be a CD on Public Bath very soon [*Mantako*, out now]. This will be our 4th release. After that, a CD on Japan Overseas of live material [*Livers and Giggers*, out now], which will be our 5th. Warner will be our 6th CD and will come out, maybe in October [not yet released]. Warner will also hopefully release domestic editions of our first 3 CDs sometime next year.



OMOIDE HATOBA DISCOGRAPHY

Releases:

Surfin' in UFO (Public Bath 7", PB-?, 1990)
Daiongaku (Alchemy Records CD, ARCD-015, 1990)
Suichi-Joe (Alchemy Records CD, ARCD-031, 1991)
Black Hawaii (Alchemy Records CD, ARCD-050, 1992)
Mantako (Public Bath CD, PBCD-5, 1994)
Livers & Giggers (Japan Overseas CD, JO94-2, 1994)

Compilation appearances:

Taste of Wild West 3 (Wax Records CD, TKCA-30167, 1990) (o/p)
 "Hoya"
Osaka Greasy Truckers (Alchemy Records CD, ARCD-007, 1990)
 "S.O.S. Amazon", "Historical(?) band", "Dog's Factor"
Japan Bashing Volume 1 (Public Bath 7", PB-2, 1990) (o/p)
 "Linear Motor Jet Shop"
Alchemism 2 (Wechselbalg CD, WCD-9, 1991)
 "Liner Motor Jet Stop"
Show-Kai (Public Bath magazine with tape, 1991)
 Assorted untitled live tracks on cassette included with magazine
Aiyoku Jinmin Battle Royal (Alchemy Records CD, ARCD-044, 1992)
 Collaborative label CD on which Omoide Hatoba participated
Land of the Rising Noise (Charnel Music CD, CHCD-9, 1994)
 "IN" (from *Suichi-Joe* CD)

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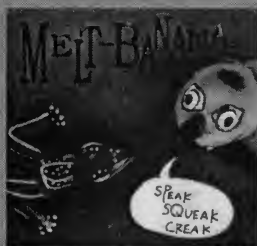


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SEED MOUTH

talks about

Emotional Sounds

with Russell Kent

Russell Kent broadcasts his "Radio Free Hatred" show every Thursday night from 10pm-2am on KFJC, 89.7 FM (Los Altos Hills, California), bringing only the best in noise and difficult sounds to the lucky listeners.

I first became aware of Seed Mouth from the Endorphine Factory/Charnel Music video "Kingdom of Noise." There in the middle of a collection of Japan's most notorious noisicians is this almost serene, psychedelic soundscape from an unknown artist with a funny name. Standing a full 180° from nearly all the other sounds and images on the video, this piece has a very strong kind of 'eye of the hurricane' presence that leaves nothing to be desired. It struck me somehow as a very personal piece of work. Its haunting, meditative quality and a release date of 1984 had me curious if there was any more Seed Mouth material to be found.

It wasn't until April of '94 when Mayuko Hino of C.C.C.C. came to San Francisco that I would learn more. She told me that he had several tapes available. Then, to make a long story short, Mayuko ended up totally destroying a rather pricey bass cabinet of mine during a live performance on my radio show (with Monte Cazazza, Mason Jones of Trance, and Elden M. of Allegory Chapel Ltd.). Mayuko felt very bad, and she assured me that she would somehow repay me for the damage. Several weeks later I

received a package in the mail from Mayuko, full of ultra-rare Japanese releases. Among the gems were six of Seed Mouth's cassettes. What follows is an interview by mail with Hirohito Taneguchi, a discography of his recorded work and reviews of the tapes I have. This is the work of a true musical mad-



man whose sound ranges from childish piano bangings to beautiful, deep dark soundscapes; and almost everything in-between. Here is the work of an 18-year career in experimental sounds that still continues today.

Your first recordings were done in 1976. How did you become interested in musical experimentation so long ago? Who influenced you?

SM: Then, I had mental illness. I was searching in self-expression. My encounters with composed music decided the course of my life: expression is my life. I was influenced by much electronic contemporary music, minimal music, much traditional music (other countries too), and many rock bands (particularly German rock, etc). I began making music at the same time I became interested in it.

Much of your work seems very personal. Are you glad after so many years that interested people can hear your sounds abroad?

SM: Yes.

Does Seed Mouth ever perform live?

SM: I rarely perform live, but if someone needs me to, I will. I perform live two or three times a year usually. If you need my performance, I will go to California.

Do you have a background in traditional music? What instruments do you play?

SM: I have a little background in traditional music. I play many kinds of instruments. For example: voice, synthesizer, recorder, violin, guitar, piano, tapes, sampler, radio and other materials.

What are your thoughts on the great number of "noise" artists in Japan and around the world who have appeared over the last 10 or 12 years? Are there any noise artists that you like?

SM: In Japan, I like Merzbow, Hijokaidan, Incapacitants, Aube, and Haino Keiji. In the world, I like MB, Nurse with Wound, P16.D4, Nocturnal Emissions, and Zoviet France. I like other world noise more than Japanese noise.

You have released four cassettes from Seed Mouth, and one from Hirohito Taneguchi. Do you have more work recorded? What's in the future for Seed Mouth? Any plans for LPs or CDs?

SM: I released the cassette "SCUM" from the SSSM

label in Nagoya, Japan. And SD-09, LI-01, LI-02 released from SEED Records. And I participated a little in other compilations. I have more work recorded by Seed Mouth now. I will release a compilation CD before the end of the year. I will release a solo CD next year (maybe.....).

Is there anything you want people to know about your music and what it means to you?

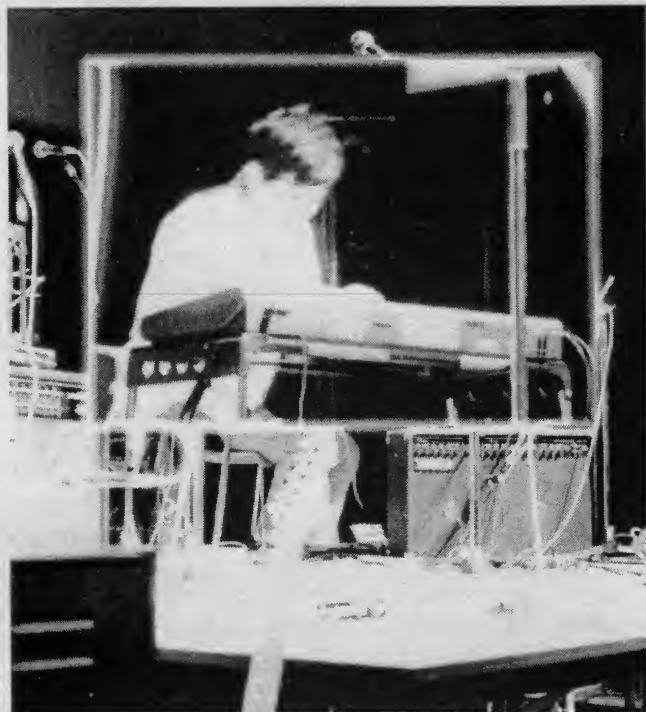
SM: My noise sound is not simple noise. My sound has some emotion. The emotion you maybe keep in your mind. But its mind may be Japanese mind. I call my sound ambient noise. Sorry, cheap English.

Seed Mouth

"First"

Cassette, Seed Records, SD-01

A collection of early works from 1976 through 1981. The A-side begins with three tracks of distorted Casiotone melodies that sound quite stark. Four is a multi-tracked piece with keyboards, bass, percussion, guitar and vocals that form a warped little "song." Five is a distorted, lo-fi, one-chord guitar riff that propels a little tune with echoed vocals. Six is a short floaty guitar tune with a sparse synsonics drum beat. The B-side opens with an incredible track featuring distorted synth manipulations with some good taped voices thrown in, and some radio activity. One of my favorites, this one gets an A+. Two is a crazed work of total musical insanity. Percussion, vocals, harmonicas, casiotones, accordion? And other assorted noises and bangings are found herein. Last is



an off-kilter, distorted and lo-fi keyboard noodling about.

Seed Mouth

"A Compilation of Kasu"

Cassette, Seed Records, SD-02

I asked a Japanese friend of mine the meaning of "kasu." "Flakes or crumbs," she replied. And although this is the tape which contains "Twilight City" (the track on the "Kingdom of Noise" video), it is indeed a compilation of kasu. Mostly scattered musical tracks with a very wide range of sounds and a lot of short songs. A1 is an angular, minimal synth track, followed by a tortured little guitar riff, dissonant keyboard chordings and a spooky vocal. Real cool. A3 is "Twilight City," the beautiful "Kingdom of Noise" track. A4 is a cool psych-style guitar riff with drums and echoed-out bass jams; some vox, too. A5 is a kind of pensive synth piece with a sorta mid-80s MTV sound vocal line. It's actually a good song, too. A6 is a spooky kiddie song done on piano. B1: cascading piano notes float around bending undercurrents of noise. Spacey and beautiful. Several songs on this side are similar: off-key and out of tune, he strums an acoustic guitar and "sings." B3 is a little disco tune done with synsonics and casio. B4 is the worst version of "You make me Dizzy Miss Lizzy" you'll ever hear. B5 is a sparse synth track with real archaic drum and synth sounds, and a monotone vocal line. B6 is total kasu: about 30 seconds of childish voices all sped-up. B7 is a trippy little trance guitar thing with a Japanese folk twist. Other tracks range from Residents-style synth ditties to a noisy, totally fucked-up circus soundtrack where dead animals nailed to gargoyle terror horses spin in eternal darkness on Satan's carousel.

Seed Mouth

"Voice of Phlegm"

Cassette, Seed Records, SD-03

Side A opens with dissonant piano drifting above a decayed landscape of noise. Contemplative spacedirgenoise. Track 2 allows discordant synth strings to hang above a helicopter from Hell while a rhythmic structure of bells and percussion moves the track along. On the third piece, we get a dense, deep and dreamy darkness with some treated vox here and there; kind of like "Twilight City." Side B is one long metal percussion track accompanied by slowly-shifting synth modulations. It's a bit long for what's going on.

Seed Mouth

"Boötes"

Cassette, Seed Records, SD-04

Side A is a sweeping, churning psychedelic vortex both noisy and musical. He takes you to Heaven

on the wings of Hell. Side B has two tracks: a long, spacey meditative piece of traditional-sounding Japanese melodies, relaxing and contemplative; and then deep, low-frequency synth drones, high-pitched synth bends, bells, and a minimal synth melody float around the room.

Seed Mouth

"Over the Head of Persons"

Cassette, Seed Records, SD-05

Side A opens with a short blast of harsh noise, with Casio drones, tortured guitar feedback and distorted vox: A+. A2: cool static sounds with low-frequency rumbles, slowed-down distorted-vox and occasional analog synth tones. Next, a beautifully-fucked-up Japanese folk/noise track with slowed-down multi-tracked vocals, percussion sounds of some sort, acoustic guitar and then right when he introduces the driftsy synth stuff, it ends cold. Then a multi-tracked guitar and bass, with low-freq undertones, kinda noodly. But it's followed by a full-frontal assault of harsh terror guitar screaming bloody murder. Next, lo-fi distorted riffs delay into the murk and mire. A real horror show. The tape's concluded by a trip down the twisted path of Moog Hell with some found-sound radio voices at the end. Excellent.

Seed Mouth

"Gurgitation"

Cassette, Seed Records, SD-06


Side A is a long droning track. Ripping low-frequency action with a haze of floating noise and backwards cymbal loops. Lots of echoed sounds: *killer*. Side B has two tracks. First, a piece of long floating, bending drones. Trance with a capital 'T'. Second, quiet water sounds and low-frequency dronage; a cool ambient track.

Many of Seed Mouth's tapes are available directly from the artist, while some are distributed in the U.S. by Anomalous Records (see Address listing at the end of the magazine). Interested readers can contact Seed Mouth at:

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c/o Hirohito Taneguchi
17-5 Kurose, Toyama City
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2.9(水)
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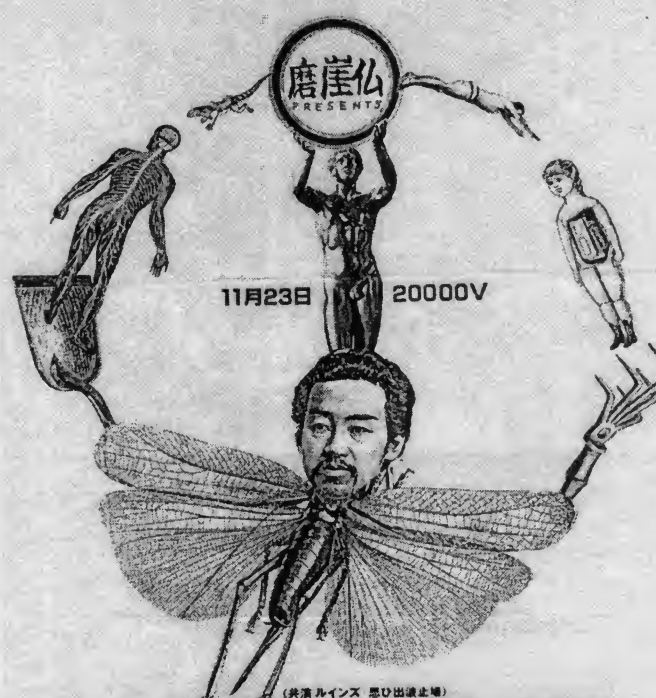
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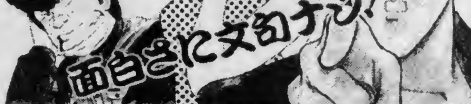
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Emergency! Living Dead in Tokyo Bay

Dir. Kazuo "Gaira" Komizu, 1991

A meteor lands in Tokyo Bay, causing a cloud of toxic vapor to cover the city. The dead come back to life, killing and eating the living. The military closes the city, not allowing anyone to enter or leave. We meet a young woman, Keiko (Cuti Suzuki), whose father (Ita Kirihaara) is a military man who has left instructions for her to destroy the leader of the scavengers who are killing the remaining humans. Keiko's father, meanwhile, is organizing a rescue group elsewhere. Luckily, he has left a specially-constructed suit for her to use, something like Batman meets Robocop.

Keiko discovers that the bad guy is a renegade military man, General Hugioka. He has experimented on the remaining living humans and concocted a virus which creates a hybrid human-zombie soldier. With his new army, he plans to protect Japan and, in the long run, take over the world to ensure a safe society for all (or something like that).

Our heroine teams up with a band of arms-running street punks, and they take on the evil General and his group of pseudo-zombie mutants.

The direction and photography is surprisingly nice, with good lighting effects and some interesting settings. Alas, the choreography of the fight scenes leaves a great deal to be desired, though the zombies drool and moan quite nicely. The combination of zombie gore and social commentary is interesting, but the action is lacking in realism and power. Not a bad movie, but it wasn't all it could have been.

Gunhed

On an island one thousand miles from the Asian coast, Cybortech Corp. built a complex to build computers. The main computer, KIRON5, controlled every aspect of the facility, making the handful of custodians and their families unnecessary. KIRON declared war and a Gunhed battalion was dispatched. The island has remained silent for seventeen years. Until now.

Similar to *Aliens 2*, we have a crack team of militaristic pirates on their way to loot a supposedly vacant island. The twist to this Japanese team is that half are American. Each speaks their own language but, as if this is a completely bilingual society, everyone understands everyone else. The Japanese/American dichotomy continues throughout the movie, which I found entirely fascinating. Only the English is subtitled (in Japanese), but the movie is pretty easy to follow anyway. Come on, it's an action movie!

The pirates are here to gather pieces of the Gunheds, which get "a good price." They're also interested in finding the cache of 2001 whis-



key.

After they land, the team finds Sergeant Nym of the Texas Air Rangers, a honey blond with grey green eyes, roaming the island. She tells them that "a robot went wild in Dallas and went to the nuclear facility." Somehow the accident is tied to KIRON5. She's here to discover the connection.

Of course, something picks off the pirates until only "Brooklyn" and Nym are left. They are rescued by the two surviving custodians' kids, a boy with a limp called 7 and a mute teenaged girl called 11.

Brooklyn wants to build a Gunhed, but Nym tells him it would take weeks to collect the parts, months to put them together. The wonderful sets are jumbled heaps of rusty, dusty junk. Nym can't wait. She's off to retrieve the vial of Texmexium which KIRON has synthesized. With it, KIRON can interface with every piece of machinery throughout the world.

Brooklyn, being a mechanical wiz, soon gets a Gunhed computer up and running. It tells him (in English) that at 0 hour, the island's main tower becomes a nuclear reactor, using the Texmexium as fuel. The countdown begins.

Nym tells him to get the Gunhed on its feet and come help her: "The true hero doesn't think about what he's doing. He does things because he has to."

The visual design of this movie is breathtaking, from the stainless steel catwalks over the absinthe-green liquid in the central command center to the huge Gunhed, which can transform from bipedal to roll on four wheeled feet like a mechanical cat. The angle of the model shots is so low that everything seems enormously tall and heavy. This is state of the art.

There are enough rousing speeches (in English) about the Brooklyn Dodgers and humanity's disregard of "the odds" to give the movie a philosophical backbone — in between gladiator battles as Brooklyn and Gunhed fend off KIRON5's defenses. In a way, this is a subversive movie, with its message that you have to work together, whether it's male and female, Japanese and American, or man and machine. There's ultimately a message of hope here: "Maybe it's the bottom of the 9th, but we both want to beat the odds."

Look, you can't take the philosophy of an action movie too seriously, can you?

(Loren Rhoads)

	Last Frankenstein	
	<i>Dir. Sake Kawamura, 1992</i>	

Here we have a most peculiar movie, which has only a surface resemblance to the Frankenstein story, and that only during portions of the film. It's divided into chapters with headings like "God of Death," "Human Body," and "Catastrophe."

As the film opens, Tokyo is plagued with suicides,

as cults of suicide form. Professor Sarusara (played by Akira Hashimoto) learns that the suicide trend is a disease with an incubation period of 3 to 5 years. His wife killed herself (shown in flashbacks) 5 years ago, so he believes that his psychic daughter, Mai, and himself are at risk.

After Mai has a breakdown and enters a catatonic trance, Sarusara travels to visit renegade mad scientist Aleo, who lives in a distant laboratory with a hunchbacked assistant Haruo and his weird wife. Aleo is a weird misanthrope with an eyepatch who hates the human race, so he refuses to help cure the suicide plague. Instead, he is working to create a "Beyond Human" race — a new Adam and Eve without emotions, who will raise a new race after all the humans kill themselves. As it turns out, Aleo needs Mai's psychic powers to provide the essential "spark" of life to animate his new race. She obliges him, but the monsters won't breed as planned, which Sarusara attributes to their lack of emotions. Aleo disagrees, and tries to teach the couple about sex.

Shortly the monsters fall in love with the wrong people, and the male monster (of course) attacks Aleo. Afterwards, the monster lives in the laboratory with Sarusara and Mai, studying human behavior. We learn that he is a child of the universe born from the sea, as he walks into that sea and vanishes.

It's difficult to know what to make of this movie. It might be about having reasons to live, and it certainly intends to show how important emotions are. But then, it's also a fairly low-budget, funny kind of horror movie, with all the good cliches: stylish evil bad guys, mad scientists, hunchbacked henchmen, psychic daughters, and monsters. Good stuff worth tracking down.

√964 Pinocchio

<i>Dir. Syouzun Fukui, 1991, color, 96 minutes</i>
--

A most peculiar, post-modern type of art film, this is the story of a man whose memory has been erased, and is then sold or rented for use as a sex puppet; hence his name, Pinocchio (#964). The film opens with Pinocchio in bed with two women, who drag him outside and abandon him. A young woman named Himiko finds him wandering the streets, mute and stupid. As she takes him in, feeds him, and teaches him his name, we see his "creator" shouting at his subordinates because Pinocchio has been lost; something bad will happen if he is brought into contact with the public.

During flashbacks, we hear Pinocchio being told that "your memory will never come back." But as Himiko teaches him to talk, his brain reactivates and slowly his memory does begin to return. As this happens, he begins spurting blood and mucous in a horrifyingly messy way. Himiko freaks out and goes screaming through a subway station, vomiting big

piles of starchy white stuff. Then things really get weird, as she seems to go insane, and welds manacles to Pinocchio with chains attached to a pile of metal junk from a scrapyard. She proceeds to drag him through the streets, telling him "You're gonna be as you are."

Meanwhile, one of the doctor's men, searching for Pinocchio, finally encounters Himiko, who takes him to Pinocchio. More of the doctor's men come, with a plan to kill her and Pinocchio, but they fail, Pinocchio escapes, and goes running through the streets to the city's outskirts, where he was created. The big showdown with the doctor comes, as Pinocchio yells "You said you would help me," then kills him. The rest of the ending is inexplicable, but almost everyone dies screaming.

Beautifully-made, this film would have benefitted from slightly more editing; a number of scenes go on for much longer than my patience did. Nonetheless, it's enjoyable and entertaining. The soundtrack, by Dowser, is superb.



Tetsuo having one of those days...

The Pornographers

Dir. Shohei Imamura, 1966, black & white, 128 minutes

This examination of sexual mores and anti-social behavior has a 60s sort of feel to it, even if we're talking here about Japan in the 60s. Ogata-san is head of a family, trying to make ends meet by making cheap 8mm porno films (with some call girl arrangements on the side). Haru, his wife, is a widow with a son (Koichi) and daughter (Keiko) from her previous marriage. Haru, guilty over breaking her promise to her dying husband not to take another man, believes he has been reincarnated as a carp in her fishtank. Plus, she has strong...feelings...for her son Koichi, and has a weak heart which ends her in the hospital.

Meanwhile, Ogata is arrested for selling his porno films, Koichi runs off with the household money, and Keiko starts hanging out and having sex with hoodlums. Ogata is released and starts having sex with Keiko, Haru goes crazy, and things go downhill.

I don't want to give away all of the details of what happens. Suffice it to say that eventually Ogata winds up retreating from the world. He constructs a realistic female doll as a substitute for the real women he couldn't deal with; he does name the doll Haru, however, indicating that some feelings can't be completely severed. After refusing to sell his doll for a million yen, he becomes engrossed in his work one evening in his barge workshop. Unknown to him, while he talks to the doll and stitches in its hair, his barge comes loose from its moorings and he floats out to sea.

Suddenly the picture shrinks, and voiceovers come in, indicating that the whole thing has been one of the movies Ogata and his partners have filmed. One of his partners asks him "You understand this man, don't you?"

A hard question to answer for the viewer, perhaps. This film is occasionally disjointed and con-



Dowser

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This soundtrack CD isn't very easily available these days, but there are rumors about a pending re-is-

s...ich is an extremely worthwhile project.

This collection of electronically-constructed themes is, unlike many soundtracks, quite listenable without the visual component. Alternately rhythmic and ominous, an impressive collection of strange noises are used to create a rather foreboding soundscape of alien territory.

fusing, but holds the interest even during its slow moments, if only because one wants to find out what could possibly go wrong next. There are moments of inspiration, such as when Haru goes mad, and the camera shows things from her point of view, isolated from everything and everybody. But the characters are difficult to identify with, or feel sympathy for; they perform actions without showing more than outlines of personalities. On the other hand, this could be very much on purpose, because it allows you to fill in their blanks from your own character.

An intriguing film, despite a few reservations.

Tetsuo: The Iron Man

Combining the inanimate stop-motion surrealism of Jan Svankmeier and the Brothers Quay with Mike Jitlov's *Wizard of Speed and Time* jump-cuts, this movie's post-industrial melange is beautifully decadent. *The Iron Man* had to be made in black and white to allow the director's imagination free-reign. You really have to see it.

The plot of *The Iron Man* is simple enough to summarize: a salaryman and his girlfriend are obsessed by sex and are punished for it. While fucking in his car when he's driving, the salaryman and girlfriend run down the Metal Fetishist. Granted, he'd run screaming into the middle of the road after he found maggots in the gash in his thigh, but then he'd thrust an oily, rusted metal rod into that gash in the first place. Follow me? It's not so linear in the movie, but it eventually all makes sense.

Rather than take the wounded man to a hospital, the salaryman stuffs him into the back of his car. He and his girlfriend drive to the park and roll the Fetishist down an embankment to die. Then they have screaming sex against a tree.

The glorious revenge lifts this movie above any American sex-and-suffering flick. Somehow the Metal Fetishist has infected the salaryman with metal beneath his skin. First there's a tiny steel splinter in his cheek. Next thing you know, his penis has become a whirring two-foot-long drill. Of course the girlfriend dies — women always do when they enjoy sex.

The erotic subtext kicks in when the Metal Fetishist steps through the decaying body of the girlfriend to bring the salaryman flowers. Things become increasingly surreal until Rustman and Ironman fight the battle of the titans through an abandoned industrial complex. In the end, the only weapon the Iron Man has in the face of the corroding powers of Rustman (the Metal Fetishist) is his whirring penis. As he "screws" the Fetishist, their bodies bind together into a colossus of metal.

The dialogue is so minimal, the movie can be followed without subtitles. However, in translation,

the homoerotic becomes a manifesto. As the two-headed colossus trundles through a Japanese neighborhood (must have been something to see when they were filming!), Tetsuo groans, "I feel great." The Fetishist/Rustman says, "How about turning this whole world into metal and then we can rust it all.... Only love can put an end to this fucking world."

(Loren Rhoads)



Tetsuo II: Body Hammer

In the way that *Evil Dead II* was a sequel and remake to the first movie of that name, *Tetsuo II* starts at a new beginning with a bigger budget to retell the story of a man overwhelmed by machinery growing out of his body. Tomoroh Taguchi returns as a man who can't control the metal.

The homoerotic manifesto of the previous movie has been removed. I think this is the first time I've watched a director move from cult status to mainstream in another culture. The compromises seem the equivalent.

Tetsuo is still a salaryman, now living in a bright clean Tokyo apartment with his wife and son. He tells his wife that he's just had a dream of his real parents. He has no memories before the age of eight, before his foster parents adopted him.

Two shaved-headed goons dressed in black terrorize the family in a crowded mall. They shoot Tetsuo in the chest with an odd mechanical gun before kidnapping the boy. None of the other shoppers pay any attention. The way they turn away from the drama is creepy.

Despite the pain in his chest, Tetsuo helps his wife recapture their son. The boy is kidnapped a second time from inside their apartment. Tetsuo chases the same guy onto the roof. Anger transforms Tetsuo into a flame which vaporizes the boy when the bald man holds him up as a shield. Laughing, the kidnapper escapes. Tetsuo has a premonition that all will be destroyed.

Tetsuo himself is kidnapped by the goons and locked into an industrial strength virtual reality helmet. Because he's such "a mild specimen," they



Chu Ishikawa
Tetsuo
 CD, Japan
 Overseas, JO94-0

After a limited release on Japanese label F2, this collection of music from the and *Tetsuo II* films was happily re-issued for

sale outside Japan by Japan Overseas. As those who have seen the films can attest, the music is an extremely powerful, important part of the experience. Using clanging metal percussion to create driving rhythms, Ishikawa's music propels the action on-screen. At other moments, electronic and acoustic scrapes and tones lend a feeling of dread and uneasiness which is important in helping the films keep the viewer off-balance.

Also importantly, the music is strong enough to stand well on its own. Within the films, it's an important character, and outside the films it remains a mesmerizing listening experience.

For more information about Ishikawa, see this issue's interview with his new group, Der Eisenrost.

have chosen him as the guinea pig for a special gun that will allow them to turn their bodies into weapons at will. They torture him with images of his son's death until gun barrels protrude from his chest and he shoots the place up.

Little did they know, *Tetsuo* is actually the long-lost brother of the man running the humans-into-machinery show. Nameless, the mastermind is dressed in the same runner's uniform with an X on his chest as the Metal Fetishist from the previous movie. I'll call him MF for short. When they were children, the MF and his older brother were given guns by their father, guns that mutated into their arms and became part of their bodies. The boys see their father fucking their mother at gun point — then blow off the back of her head at the point of orgasm. Eight-year-old *Tetsuo* transforms his entire body into a weapon and kills Dad. This is the source of his memory loss.

The movie reminded me a lot of the French film *Diva*, with its layer upon layer of interconnection and coincidence. It's also reminiscent of *Videodrome*, with things materializing in and out of men's bodies.

Without the grunge and dirt of *The Iron Man*,

director Tsukamoto falls back on style. Whole scenes are shot with blue or red gels, or in stark white and black sets that leach the colors from the film. The beauty of the devastation was more apparent in monochrome. Still, the flash images of cells, crystals, and writhing metal are very worth watching.

Tsukamoto sneaks homoeroticism into the film with a gratuitous scene of bald, greased bodybuilders which combines the look of a Madonna video (circa "Express Yourself") with Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. I wish there had been more art in *Tetsuo II*, and less gun-sliding, even if the guns did protrude from people's arms or chests.

(Loren Rhoads)

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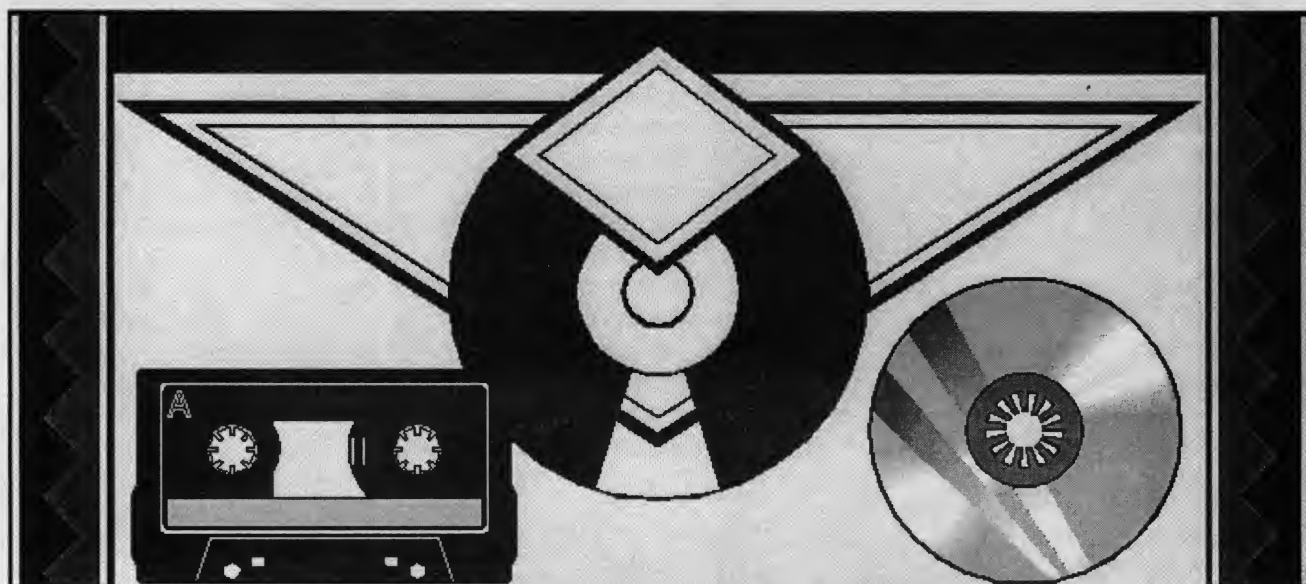
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AUDIO REVIEWS

Here's where we attempt to describe singles, albums, cassettes and other forms of musical media. If you're a label with releases by Japanese artists, please send what you can and we'll review it. If you can't afford to send promos, at least send us your catalog so we can see what you've got. We will review any media — cassettes, CDs, vinyl, 8-track tapes...whatever. Note that this time around, since it's our first issue, we've reviewed both old and new releases. Also, we've primarily reviewed things we like, so most of these reviews are fairly positive. For this issue, since we want to introduce our readers to new stuff, there didn't seem to be much point in reviewing lame shit. Time enough for that in the future. All of the following reviews are by Mason Jones unless otherwise noted in parentheses at the end of the review.

CDs and LPs

Boredoms

"Onanie Bomb Meets the Sexpistols"

CD, WEA, WPC2-7502

Here we have the major-label re-issue of the first Boredoms LP, pieces of which appeared as bonus tracks on the Shimmy Disc CD edition of "Soul Discharge." This is nonetheless worth obtaining even if you have that: there are tracks here which were not included there; in addition, those were indexed as one track, while this was mastered intelligently. You also get some hilarious liner notes/lyrics(?) in this CD's booklet. As of this writing, this one hasn't been released in the U.S., so it remains to be seen if they'll preserve the Japanese liner notes, change any song titles, or other-

wise confuse things as has happened with some other U.S. versions ("Super Roots" for example). While this edition is expensive and difficult to find outside Japan, if you want to be guaranteed of getting your "No Core Punk" and "Feedbackfuck" as they were intended, you might want to grit your teeth and go for it.



Children Coup d'Etat

"Masochistic Instruments"

CD, Bloody Butterfly, ZIKSBB-002

This is a release from 1991, but it has never gotten the attention I thought it deserved. Since the band's appearance on some compilations and singles, I've received questions about whether they have any full-length releases, so...here's a review. On this CD, Children Coup d'Etat give us 18 tracks of art-rock with a weird sense of humor. I find that I tend to focus on the use of violin in many of the songs, because it's an unusual element to find in this sort of music. The rhythms are quite varied and erratic, with a strong bass presence and guitar work that wanders here and there

adding atmospheric noises when needed. The violin occasionally pins down the melody, and then heads off into some alien place unexpectedly. Some of the tracks add keyboards and horns, such as track 2. The band presents a very eclectic variation of styles, from quiet little ditties to avant-rockers to funereal marches, a mutated James Bond theme, and more. All are handled well, and with the aforementioned sense of humor, which prevents the pretentiousness which could otherwise spoil the listener's enjoyment.



Contagious Orgasm

"Voltage Controlled Filter"

CD, Tesco Organisation, Tesco-013

A beautifully-constructed set of sounds presented in a beautifully-constructed package courtesy of Germany's Tesco Organisation label. This CD comes in a wrap-around digipack-like cardboard sleeve printed on both sides, with a cork-board front and a cloth strip that wraps around the sleeve when it's closed. The music, about 73 minutes of collaged soundscapes by Hiroshi Hashimoto, is presented as six tracks, each long enough to develop during its playing time so that by the end it no longer resembles its beginning. Attempting to describe each of the pieces is pointless; suffice it to say that each contains elements ranging from the quiet and eerie to the harsh and difficult. Sounds don't occur randomly in these pieces,

however. There's a feeling of impressive composition here, where a tape of someone's voice will insert itself between heavily-reverbed drones and percussion, and it seems to fit there, rather than simply happening because it was convenient. Sure, there are bits which don't work so well, like the laughter at the end of "Maria," which seemed too easy, but for the most part this is highly superior sound-construction which should not be missed.

Deisel Guitars

"Atom"

Cassette, Good Microphone, GOOD 01

This nicely-packaged cassette presents four pieces of dense, hard guitar-generated noise. The first piece, "Grind Master," is a duo by Ogawa and Noseyama, a thick, metallic crunch of distortion. "Ictus" is a solo recording by Ogawa, but is no less heavy than the duo. It is possible to notice more individual sounds, rather than being overwhelmed quite so much. On side B the first track, "Medium of Lights," is a solo piece by Noseyama, and is definitely more ambient and less hostile, though still noisy enough to satisfy. It reminds me somewhat of recent guitar recordings by K.K. Null, though it floats more and drones less than Null's work. Very nice indeed. The title track, "Atom," concludes the tape. It's another duo, but is less impenetrable than the other duo on this tape. Instead, we get hovering metallic scrapings and booming waves of bass. Cool stuff all around on this tape. The cassette's insert is nicely printed on clear laminate over a silverish material; very attractive.

Dislocation

"Carve Another Notch"

CD, Scatter, 01:CD

This is the second CD from Dislocation, following an earlier 1994 release on the P.S.F. label.

This one comes to us courtesy of the new Scatter label from Scotland. Once again, we have an unusual experimentation comprised of Fujio Kimura on electric strings, Yoshinori Yanagawa on saxophone, and Toyohiro Okazaki on electronics. Also credited is Keishi Kiyokawa for "intermixed action and video," though I really don't know if his contribution is audible on the CD or not. Three tracks are included here; the first two are the two parts of "Between the Windows of the Sea," totalling about 17 minutes, and feature guest Syohei Iwasaki (presumably he of Monde Bruits fame) on sampling. These two pieces are relatively noisy works that bring Borbetomagus to mind, though Dislocation really aren't quite as formidably imposing. The final track, "Carve Another Notch," is a spacey 58-minute excursion into minimal sax moans, flowing guitar work, and other-worldly electronic sounds. It's a pretty mind-expanding listen, and well-worth any work it might take to find this release. High marks.

Dissecting Table

"Ultimate Psychological Description II"

CD, Dark Vinyl Records, DVLR-3

Dark, foreboding, ominous, violent moods are the area in which Dissecting Table dwells. Ichiro Tsuji, the man behind Dissecting Table, is mining a noisy, metallic vein of sound which perhaps began with S.P.K. Heavy rhythms, sheets of noise, sampled clangs and screams, and very harsh, guttural vocals create an aura of dread. I like it a lot. This is the sort of dense, intense, rhythmic sound that the so-called "aggro-tech" bands attempt and fail to achieve. Recent Dissecting Table releases (such as the excellent "Zigoku" CD) have shown a development of atmosphere, but perhaps not as much pure energy as these older works. This CD's title is indexed "II" because the

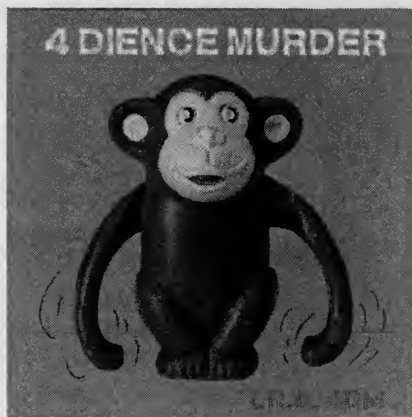
first single by Dissecting Table was "I." Several of the tracks on here are from that single, including "Accomplishment" and the two live recordings here (featuring the Ruins' Tatsuya Yoshida on metal percussion), "Silent Violence" and "Camouflage." Several other tracks here are from Dissecting Table's first LP, "Ultra Point of Intersection Exist," and the track "Dead Gods" appeared previously on the "Land of the Rising Noise" CD compilation. The liner notes are somewhat confusing, since they claim that the first eight tracks were recorded in 1992 and 1993, which isn't the case unless these are re-recordings of the older pieces. In addition, the track listing skips number 8, so its origin is a mystery, though I think it may be from the first LP. In any case, the single and LP are long out of print, so this is a welcome repository for these earlier and harsher recordings from Dissecting Table.

Flower Travellin' Band

"Satori"

CD, Atlantic Japan

I work with this guy and he knows a lot about 70s-type things (he *even* played keyboards in a Hendrix cover band made up of USAF guys in the Phillipines) and he said that if you were into Grand Funk or Bloodrock you were pretty much ridiculed for your pedestrian efforts to proclaim your tastes as "hard." He told me he jumped ship for the likes of Blue Oyster Cult and Black Sabbath. So that's where the Flower Travellin' Band is at in this stage of their career. Rockin' out with the dieties of India, blowing harp in a cartoon haunted house and because they're from Japan they've got to be great, right? Uh...yeah, sort of. My only complaint is that there isn't a part two photograph of the cover with George Wada running down the flowery dell, hands in the air, screaming "Ahhh, I've got ants in my hair!" (John Whitson)



4Dience Murder

"I.R.A. 4DM..."

CD, Murder, CD-1313

Some mostly straightforward hard punk rock here. The first track, "The March of 4DM," is a silly carnival song which, after a minute and a half, breaks into guitar feedback and heavy riffing. "Attack by a Flood" is hard, fast thrashing with deep guttural vocals. All of the songs here are pretty much high-speed punk rock, but some of the tracks outstay their welcome. Those which succeed the most are the ones like "We Mosh and Kool Dance," which gets to the point quickly, barrels along, and finishes just when it should. Towards the end of the CD is some pretty funny stuff, like "Doolfaybkatta," which is just "Attack by a Flood" backwards; and "You are my Sunshine," which is, yes, the song you know and hate. It starts out straight a capella, but of course is properly punkified by the end. The CD has a great foldout sleeve with tons of photos and the lyrics, such as they are. Not the greatest record in the world, but there's some fun to be had here.

Tetsuo Furudate

"Macbeth"

CD, SSE Records, SSE 4030

Not very many people outside Japan seem to have encountered Tetsuo Furudate's previous CD, "l'Arrêt de mort," which is a

shame as it's one of the finest albums of discordant guitar that I've heard. This release is a very different sort of work, though there's still some damn cool guitar playing by Furudate to be found here. This "concept" work is based on Shakespeare's play Macbeth, although it would not be accurate to say that it's an enactment of the play. Instead, Furudate seems to have taken some elements from the play and used them as inspiration to create an album of extraordinary sounds. To quote from the somewhat bizarre English translation of the liner note: "Existence of clear death, assertive, almost politic, growing without limits. Deprivation of the meaning. Expression of the lack of understanding. Death of the trees." Got it? The music is divided into three scenes, though in the liner notes those scenes are further divided into smaller parts. The music uses samples from Penderecki, Strauss, Shostakovich, Andrey Tarkovsky's film "The Mirror," Orson Welles' 1947 film of "Macbeth" and other sources, as well as instruments played by Furudate and numerous guests. These include vocals by Reiko Azuma; drums by Tatsuya Yoshida of the Ruins; tape noise by Merzbow; soundscapes by Christophe Charles; and voice by Juri of Kuroyuri Shimai. Mixed with keyboards and guitar sound effects by Furudate, these elements all mix to create a fascinating soundscape whether or not the listener considers the role of Macbeth in the proceedings. This is one to seek out and enjoy.



Gaji
"Blowpipe"

CD, ZK Records, ZIKS-012

This is a cool item, recorded live at Tokyo's La Mama club. For a live recording, the sound quality is quite spectacular. There's no audience noise, so I assume it's a board recording; the mixing is perfect. What we get is a good drum/bass rhythm, with blasts of distorted guitar only when necessary, and a woman on vocals who belts out short jerky phrases as the rhythm stops and starts with her. The band is very tight as it spits out short songs that meld a punk rock feel with a No Wave kind of influence. The vocals are in English, and the lyrics are listed in the CD booklet, so we can sing along with songs like "Wire in Heat": "Wind my brain with the wire in heat" and "Treasure": "Find a treasure in desert land / Anything to start with something / Anything could be treasure here / alert." I found that some of the songs felt a bit static, but fans of Melt-Banana might like to check this one out for a similar sound, though not an identical one.

Gaseneta
"Sooner or Later"
 CD, P.S.F. Records

This CD releases the legendary punk beast from '78. Gaseneta's ferocious guitar attack with burning leads and a genius sense of non-logic serves to cement the

obvious between punk rock and free-jazz. Some skinny kid is beating a guitar with visions of rock stardom in his head and the rhythm section keeps up and chugs out with all the mistakes just shining like it is the greatest thing that ever happened. The sound quality isn't much but that's part of the charm of this recording. These guys were sniffing glue while you were out eating paste. (John Whitson)

The Gerogerigegege
"Instruments Disorder"

CD, Mediacapsule, MCG-2

Subtitled "170 songs CD," this is actually one long program on the CD, 39 minutes of blasting, battering, clatter-noise. The tray card lists the titles of all 170 songs, though, opening with "Fucking Machine" and ending with "Veneral Disease" (has a certain logical progression, I suppose). On the way we encounter "Moon Shot" (041), "Furburger" (65), "Bunghole" (117) and "Mother Fellatio" (143), as examples. This was recorded in one day, with leader Juntaro Yamanouchi doing "All noise/count," Fumiyoshi Suzuki (ex-NP) on guitar & bass, and drums provided by Ruins leader Tatsuya Yoshida. Basically, this starts out loud, continues that way, and ends. Along the way there's shrieking; feedback; smashing percussion; and noise. The liner notes (in Japanese) refer to bands like the Meat Shits and A.C., which is pretty much on-target if you want comparisons. You'll know if you want this one.

The Gerogerigegege
"Recollections of Primary Masturbation"

CD, Onkel Tuka Recs, OTCD 01

This collection (338 songs, though indexed as 8 CD tracks) contains recordings by the infamous Gerogerigegege from 1985 to 1993, mostly taken from older releases which are now out of print. Tracks include pieces from

Abe Kaoru

"Solo, 1972.1.21"

CD, P.S.F. Records

PSF Records has stirred ears with its execution-style Japanese noise and "rock" releases from the monolithic fuzz-riffs of High Rise to Keiji Haino's varied plasma-dripping experiments. The label seems to be going in a slightly new direction with a posthumous release from the late great free jazz saxophonist Abe Kaoru. On CD for the first time: "Solo," a group of four lengthy selections performed alone by Kaoru (thus the title) at Japan's Pit-Inn Tea Room on the 21st of January, 1972.

The first listen immediately conjures up the living ghost of the late 60's Anthony Braxton, who shocked the world with the trenchant sounds of misanthropic saxophone productions that only he could explain or control. However, Braxton's approach was extremely calculated, showing a self-awareness of himself as musical innovator or scientist (thus his use of the chemical equations in place of song titles); his resultant sound is more sterile than that of Kaoru, whose style shows the abandonment of calculation for pure emotion. Kaoru pours his soul into each breath, using his instrument to communicate his search for identity (musical and personal).

As the CD's cover suggests, Kaoru is like a small child running through a desolate street: seemingly free yet hopelessly lost and agoraphobic. The second selection (which has no formal title, like the other pieces) begins as a romantic ode to the lonely. It starts slowly, with a wispy deep melody that is very comforting. As the piece progresses, Kaoru's control of timbre and line are only surpassed by his explosive energy and pain. Thus the piece quickly mutates from its tender beginnings into a soulful fury, filled

with pain and loss, calling to attention Kaoru's deep-rooted anger.

The anger that manifests itself in his music mirrored the troubled aspects of Kaoru's life. He was known to have a temper. Legend has it that during a scuffle with his wife, he cut off one of her toes. The destructive tendencies that spawned his music were the same ones that sparked his alcoholism and drug dependency. It was these side affects of his tormented character that propelled him to his demise.

The cause of his anguish is unknown. Perhaps Kaoru was reacting against the Japanese dictum of the unemotional, outwardly subservient individual. His created music is chaotic, it is pure emotion. On the "Solo" CD Kaoru shrieks, driving his sound to ear-piercing magnitude. He groans a guttural goulash with gaping gasps. He seems at home in his created cacophony, as if finding sense of self in the senselessness of it all.

With this PSF artifact, there is new life pumped into the memory of Abe Kaoru. His songs display a sense of melody and control that are only superseded by a rampant inner turmoil. The constant mix of the two aspects of his musical character — the high tension and the soft whispers — along with those insightful passages book-ended by the extremes, make for quite enjoyable listening. With this release, he joins Braxton, Albert Ayler, Frank Lowe, and Charles Gayle (among others) as a soulful jazz freeformist demanding identity with each lung-filled breath. (David Katznelson)

Monellaphone's "Kitanomaru Hyakkei" single and the Baby Huey "More Shit E.P." single, as well as tracks from releases on their own Vis a Vis label. This release mostly focuses on the Gero's version of what they call "trash noise core," which is a good enough description. There's guitar, drums, and vocals, but very little resemblance to anything akin to rock'n'roll. The drums flail, the guitars thrash, and leader Juntaro Yamanouchi screams. The first few seconds of each "song" occasionally sound similar to post-noise-punk, but everything quickly devolves into shrieking feedback, screaming, and sheer noise. This is definitely the area where the Gerogerigege are at their most entertaining, unlike some of their more "conceptual" releases, which often strike me as more successful theoretically than in actuality. This CD is really fun to listen to, and as a bonus is guaranteed to annoy the hell out of anyone who doesn't appreciate the joke.

Guitar Wolf

"Wolf Rock"

LP, Goner Records

Guitar Wolf is a three-piece (guitar/bass/drums) doing ultra-low-fi bluesy-sludge-rock that makes me think, in some ways, of a more laid-back, less distorted High Rise. Some tracks have a kinda surfy feel to them, though, such as "Ace of Spade." Unfortunately, this LP has the worst sound quality I've heard on an LP since, well, perhaps the first High Rise LP. In this case, it seems like the recording quality and the record pressing quality are both at an all-time low. I must admit, it does almost suit the material, but it's still a shame I think. The music does feel old somehow; it's stripped-down rock as basic as it gets, but I still wish the vocals didn't sound like they were recorded with a tin can. In any case, I couldn't convince myself that there was really

much special here to get excited about, and the recording quality clinched it.

Keiji Haino

"Watashi Dake?"

CD, P.S.F. Records, PSFD-38

This is reportedly a re-issue of Haino's first LP, but don't quote me on that. It's a nice long foray into Haino's weird little world of groaning guitars and groaning voice, a la the recent Forced Exposure CD whose title is too long for me to want to type it again. This one comes in a cool heavy paper sleeve similar to the double CD by Fushitsusha. The music is minimal, almost like Jim O'Rourke pretending to be Haino. There's emptiness between the vocal outcries and the guitar abuse, and it's nice to turn this one up and then be scared shitless when it suddenly gets really loud and strange. This would be a good place to start with Haino, though the Forced Exposure CD is a cheaper introduction for those in the U.S. If you like that one, try this.



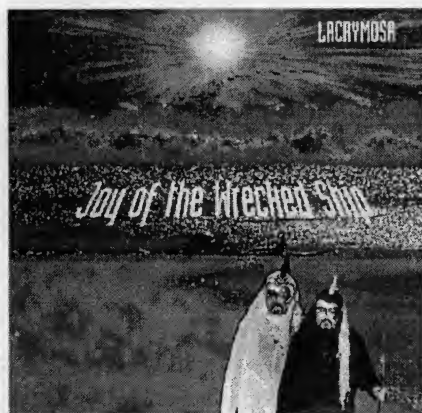
Korean Buddhist God

"Magnum You!"

CD, ZK Records, ZIKS-011

Nine tracks of heavy, Boredoms-inspired crunch'n'shout. The songs here are heavier in a grunge sort of way than the Boredoms, but the use of time changes in midstream and strongly varied portions of song structure are nonetheless reminiscent. Song

titles like "Cartoon is Apocalypse," "Your Dopamin (Let's Go)" and "Tyranno You" also bring the Bore-folk to mind, I must admit. However, I would be guilty of taking the easy way out if I left it at that, because there's more than enough individual identity here to allow the band to stand on its own. Imagine if Helmet grew a sense of humor and combined every three of their songs into one, and I'd say you've got a bit of an idea of what's on this CD. Fast, heavy guitar, shouting, hard drumming, yelps, and fun. Farther along in the CD, they really develop some great, interesting sound combinations, particularly during the epic "Tyranno You!" which is over eleven minutes long. If this CD were easier to find, KBG could easily become very popular over here. If you think I like it, well, you'd be right.



Lacrymosa

"Joy of the Wrecked Ship"

CD, SSE Records, SSE-4033

This is Lacrymosa's second CD; their first, "Bugbear," was also released by SSE. Lacrymosa is an enormous ensemble, with eleven members and one guest listed in the liner notes. The participants play everything from bass, sax and violin to flute, tabla, piano and recorder, so you know you can expect a lot of variation here. All of the music is quite restrained and calm, for the most part, lending it some sort of a cultured, jazzy

Kuroyuri Shimai

"Tsuki no Shoku"

CD, SSE Records, SSE-4020

"Lux Aeterna"

CD, SSE Records, SSE-4024

"Schwarzwald"

Video, SSE Records, SSE-4041

With four CDs and a video released on SSE Communications, Kuroyuri Shimai (Black Lily Sisters, aka Les Soeurs de Lilis Noirs) have got to be Tokyo's best-kept secret. Kuroyuri Shimai are two raven-haired, starkly-beautiful women, Juri (vocals) and Lisa (piano & background harmony), who compose ultra-pretty neo-classical music. The songs, influenced by medieval French and German court or ecclesiastical music, are characterized by crystalline piano waltzes, soaring female vocals, and overall, an enchanted atmosphere evoking an archaic period of renaissance glory. Their high-quality recordings (augmented by other musicians playing keyboards, cello, violin, percussion, bass and electric guitar) surpass the collected works of Dead Can Dance, Eden, Miranda Sex Garden, Ordo Equitum Solis, and other "neo-gothic" ensembles.

"Tsuki no Shoku" is Lisa and Juri's third CD. Where their first two CDs had some modern-styled pop songs (which would fit nicely on Sarah Records), this third CD is their most classical-oriented. Tracks 1 and 2 ("Num Kom, der Heiden Heiland" and "Her Gott, Nun Schleuss den Himmel auf") are faithful and exhilarating renditions of J.S. Bach's organ music: complex, labyrinthine fugues which conjure up images of flocks of doves in flight, sun-streaked stained-glass windows, or Latin mass in ancient cathedrals. Other songs like "Me Clamour," "Under del Linden," or "White of Snow" are delicate piano waltzes with



lilting lullabye vocals which evoke a calm, rainy afternoon ambience.

Kuroyuri Shimai's fourth CD, "Lux Aeterna," is a compilation of sixteen live tracks. Most of the songs, such as "Under the Moon" and "Marble Angel," are drawn from "Saigo wa Tenshi" and "Night with her Train of Stars and her Gift of Sleep," their first two CDs. The natural reverb of the live venue gives Juri's vocals a raw and faraway quality, while less instrumentation and sparse arrangements contribute to a more fragile sound.

"Schwarzwald" is an excellent thirteen-song video showing Lisa and Juri's ability to perform and recreate a stark neo-gothic ambience, complete with candles, black lace, long gowns, roses, and a grand piano. Although the look a bit stiff and their performance is somewhat visually unexciting (like being at a formal recital), the overall effect of their immaculate musicianship combined with the completely gothic aesthetic is totally intoxicating.

For discriminating fans of quality and distinction, Kuroyuri Shimai's releases are an infinite joy; "Tsuki no Shoku" and "Saigo wa Tenshi" (the first CD, identifiable by "Les Soeurs de Lilis Noirs" in florid script on the back cover) are essential. Look for the distinctive artwork, which seems to be a blend of baroque, impressionist, and surrealist portraits of a mysterious angel or mythological goddess. (Elden M.)

kind of feel. In fact, the potential drawback here is that things are so controlled that the music doesn't always evoke much emotion. The CD opens with "Wreck," a brief track with ocean sounds, a storm, and a tolling bell. Then "Overdose" comes in with sax, piano and xylophone, with a mournful jazz feel. Track 3, "The Resurrection," combines sax and drums with violin and bass in a very cool way, with a nice vocal interlude in the middle. "Palestine" is one of my favorite tracks; just violin, drums and clarinet, it's very beautiful. Some tracks, such as "King of the Fairies," have a very Renaissance flavor, using violin, drums and flute. This is an unusual CD, and enjoyable to listen to, if sometimes a bit too detached.



"Live Under the Sky"

Cassette, F.M.N. Sound Factory, FSF-010

According to reliable sources, this choice little tape documents a live performance by Omoide Hatoba/Boredoms guitar-god Seiichi Yamamoto, jamming with the rhythm section from the now-defunct and sadly-missed Subvert Blaze. Sounds about right to me; there are spastic guitar freakouts which certainly bear the mark of Yamamoto, and the drum/bass

solidity is impressively dense. The recording quality is surely acceptable, if not primo, but aside from lacking a bit of bottom-end punch it gets the job done fine. Favorite moments here include a track on side B with some jammin' harmonica, and some ultra-echo delay guitar work on side A. No titles or other info with this, so take it all as-is and enjoy.

**WILD
AND
CRAZY
GUYS
町田
町蔵
FROM
至福団**

Machida Machizo

"Wild and Crazy Guys"

CD, Parco Sectary, QTCA-1001

What is it? Who are they? How can we convince them to do more? I'm severely lacking of information about what the deal is with this release, but bear with me here. I've heard there's a cassette available from Machida Machizo, but then I got this CD from some friends, and whoa... It's just over half an hour of the weirdest assortment of sounds I've heard in one place in quite some time. Toy piano, retarded vocals, drum machine, bass, synthesizer, drums, whatever. A few of these tracks might be vaguely lumpable into the category of "songs" but only by stretching the definition, but it's about time to do that anyway. Sometimes there's a development with drums, instruments and singing, but more often than not it's just stringing you along for a moment, and you'll be left seconds later trying to remember how this...thing...slipped by you and erupted from your speakers. Imagine mixing a synth loop with bagpipes, a bell, operatic choir,

drum smashes, a recording of applause, and desperate vocal flailings all in one song. No? Me neither until I heard it on track 9 of this CD. Way to go. I wish I could give hints on how to find this CD, but there's no address, so just take the cover picture to a store in Japan and ask.

Mady Gula

"Blue Heaven"

Cassette, Gyuune Cassettes, 94-1
CD, Murder/Gyuune, CD2828/
CD95-0

I don't know anything about this band, except that their tape is pretty cool. It's definitely got some sort of a dense psychedelic feel to it, though some of the songs are based on fast punk rock, such as "Opel No. 4" — vocalist Kotton Casino is a woman with some bizarre singing up her sleeve. Sometimes she chatters and squeaks, sometimes she gets down and bluesy, and sometimes she's got a dreamy feel. Seems as though side B of this tape is heavier and more guitar-dominated, while side A is a bit poppier and relies more on the vocals. The recording quality is just adequate, though, and it would be a pleasure to hear more material, with a clearer recording. Just prior to going to print here, I received the CD re-issue, which is a pleasant thing — check it out!

Mamarracho

"Demo #2"

Cassette, Mamarracho

Seven brief pieces from this trio who are new to me. As the 'title' indicates, this is their second demo tape they've put together. It occupies one side of a C-30, so you know that the songs state their piece quickly. Sounds like these folks have listened to a bit of The Gerogerigegege's pseudo-punk material, but this stuff has more clarity and perhaps a tad less noisiness to it. We've got Kenji Hirano on vocals and noise; Shobu Saitoh on noise and vocals;

and Fuyu Saitoh on drums and noise. The songs sound as though they've taken some grinding rock akin to Skullflower, and buried it beneath an avalanche of noisiness. Pretty cool stuff; I hope they can put together more like this in the future, and maybe even let some of the tracks stretch out more — there's a possibility for some really intense trance-inducing noise-psych here.



The Manila Gaeri

"Return from the Manila"

CD, ZK Records, ZIKS-010

Thirteen fast-moving songs melding guitar, bass and drums with sampled (I think) loops from various sources. The best song is the opener, "We go into suit," which combines an awesome sample from Eric B and Rakim with slapped bass and a wicked guitar line into a totally slammin' memorable song. "I am a name" kicks right in with a vaguely Chili Pepper-ish rhythm but a lot more over the top and hence far more successful. The beginning of "Satan Tigar" made me think "Oh, shit, it's a lame techno rhythm!" But then the rest of the band entered into the picture, the vocals came in, and it took on a new flavor which I can't even begin to describe, but it made me happy. If I had a fit of analogistics I'd probably say that what the Boredoms are to the Butthole Surfers, these guys are to the Chili Peppers, but I don't know where that leaves us,

so what's the point? Strong funk leanings combined with a much higher gear ratio and some cool sampling and imagination with regard to sounds sprinkled on the top makes this one helluva fine listen on a summer day.

Marble Sheep & the Run-Down Sun's Children

"Whirl Live: Good Old Marble Sheep II"

2CD, Captain Trip

The Marble Sheep exist between late 60s West Coast guitar psych bands and early 70s bands like Hawkwind and Amon Duul 2. This double set was recorded between January '88 and December '89, before their excellent but now deleted Alchemy CD (how about a reissue, Jojo?) and before the band's decision to become the "official" band of the All Japan Hackey Sack and Frisbee Festival. There are extended fuzz-drenched versions of brain boners like "Cement Woman" and "Melted Moon" plus unreleased live numbers like the awesome "Hawks Out" and "Space" with a guest appearance by the Mikawa tone generator. Some of these things wind themselves out to twenty or so minutes but it's doubtful you'll find anyone spinning an imaginary ball in front of their face. Not a minute of your time will be wasted but if you are, all the better. (John Whitson)



Merzbow
"Noisembryo"

CD, Laughing Eskimo, IGLOO-001

Another new CD from Masami Akita, who's possibly setting some kind of a record for the most new releases in a 6-month period. This one stands out from the crowd, though, both visually and musically (well, noisily). It's almost a shame to duplicate the CD cover here since we can't afford color printing; even the CD itself, and the inner tray card beneath a clear inlay, are both in very bright full color. Beautiful work all around. The sounds are divided into four parts, though Merzbow's noise being what it is, the distinctions are minimal. The CD is subtitled "Psycho-Analytic Study of Coital Noise Posture," though it's hard to tell what he's getting at. Perhaps it's an attempt to mimic the psychological and emotional disturbance during sex? Sure, why not. On these tracks, Masami really gets out the editing scissors and chops up some harsh sounds into a fast-moving swirl of distortion and feedback. Because of the velocity of the shifting noise textures here, I'd rank this as one of the finest Merzbow releases of late. It holds the interest well, and rarely carries on for longer than it should without abruptly sweeping you away into another range of sounds.



Merzbow
"Venereology"

CD, Release, RR 6910-2

Packaged in a clear jewel box with a spine reading "Extreme Noise," this is truth in advertising. Four tracks totalling 50 minutes of what we've come to expect from Masami Akita and friends, aka Merzbow: noise, noise, noise. On this CD three of the tracks are Masami solo (as it says inside, "All decomposed, mixed & produced by Masami Akita"), and one was recorded live in February of 1994 with Reiko A ("noise") and Bara ("vocal"). Some bass guitar was also added on track two (not that it's noticeable as such, of course) by Kazuyoshi Kimoto. These pieces of noise show a continuation of Merzbow's recent evolution towards including some rhythmic elements in his noisescapes. The beginning of "Slave New Desert" (sic), for example, has a slow distorted percussive rhythm over which tidal waves of decomposed sounds wash. The live track here, "I Lead You Towards Glorious Times," has less dynamic tension than the others, but is still pretty dense. It's difficult to describe differences in Merzbow's noise, but this is certainly a step from his works like "Artificial Invagination" towards...something, who knows what? In any case, fans of Merzbow or those curious will naturally want to grab this CD; for one thing, it's one of the few Merzbow releases available in the U.S. at a domestic price!

MSBR
"Yasha"

Cassette, MSBR Records, MR06

In the noise scene, MSBR's Koji Tano is as infamous for the incredible packaging of his releases as he is for the noise contained therein. Cassettes and records released on MSBR are always in handmade packages, usually using painted plastics, rubber, or some other unusual fabrication. This cassette,

for example, came encased in a white handmade paper sleeve, layered for sturdiness, coated with thick white paint (or perhaps plaster, it's hard to tell). I had to slit the sides carefully, and peel back the paper, in order to extricate the cassette. Perhaps it's inevitable that I have more to say about the packaging, than the cassette. The sounds are more of MSBR's reliably dense, heavy noise a la Merzbow and Monde Bruits. Some good noise, in amazing packaging.

Null
"Flying Serpent"

10", Fourth Dimension, FD10-46

This is a beautifully-presented artifact: clear vinyl over a color picture, in a clear vinyl sleeve. Musically, we get three tracks of solo guitar manipulation from Zeni Geva leader K.K. Null. "Flying Serpent" is like a machine malfunctioning, with lots of pretty ringing tones. "Leviathan" is, as its name suggests, very heavy. Scalding bolts of electrical sound over a deep rumbling moonscape. Beautiful. The side-long "Missing Link" opens with a buzzsaw tone over a chugging behemoth rumble. The rhythmic churn continues unabated, sounding like gigantic mechanical bees swooping and diving as they race by. Definitely trance-inducing, but I found myself wanting a rhythmic change that didn't come until almost at the end. "Leviathan" is the highlight here, and it's a wonderful one.

Omoide Hatoba
"Mantako"

CD, Public Bath, PBCD-5

The fourth CD from Omoide Hatoba (loosely translated as "Harbor of Memories"), and their first one not on the Alchemy Records label (they do have their 5th CD out, however, from Japan Overseas). For those not keeping up with who's who, Omoide Hatoba's leader is Seiichi Yamamoto, also the guitarist of

Pain Jerk

Pain Jerk is a fairly new noise artist who won't be as familiar to readers as, say, Merzbow and Hijokaidan. Since 1992, Kohei Gomi has been creating extreme noise using electronics (effects, mixer, contact microphones and tapes). Y. Nagumo used to participate lending guitar noise to the project, but left and joined C.C.C.C., making Pain Jerk a solo noise outlet now. Since the first performance in February of 1993, Pain Jerk has performed frequently, both in Tokyo and Osaka.

Discography

"Pain Jerk"

AMP-002 cassette

"Thrill Killer"

AMP-003 cassette

"Head-Womb"

AMP-004 cassette & 7"

(ltd.ed. of 3)

"Angelshit"/"Down Hill Motor Race"

AMP-005 7" (ltd. ed. 15)

"Tape Bomb"

AMP-006 cassette

forthcoming

AMP-007 cassette



Pain Jerk

"Pain Jerk"

Cassette, Amp, AMP-002

Pain Jerk, to put it plainly, is working in the same vein as Merzbow and Monde Bruits: harsh, active noise. Side A of this is a studio track called "Rocketry." There's no arguing with

the dynamics here. Nothing stands still for long, and different noises come and go at dizzying speed. Side B is a live recording from 20000V in Tokyo, recorded in July of '93. It demonstrates the amount of editing which was done to create side A, as Pain Jerk live is a denser, heavier wall of noise which doesn't have the same intense mobility that the studio recording does. It's good and solid, and I'm sure that in person it was pretty damn great. For home listening, however, the studio work is clearly preferable and well-made.



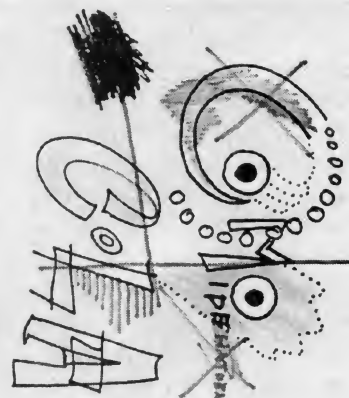
Pain Jerk

"Tape Bomb"

Cassette, Amp, AMP-006

Coming straight outta the Merzbow & Monde Brutis camp here, even more than on the self-titled cassette. Deep rumbles of bass-frequency blatt, with ferocious and manic slashing electronic squall and distorted sheets of metallic hiss and fuzz. Not quite as ultra-intimidating as the Incapacitants, but not so friendly as the organic wall'o'C.C.C.C. either, this lies in-between. Someone will surely committ Pain Jerk to CD soon, if he keeps this up, but until then, no noise otaku collection would be complete without this.

the Boredoms. Omoide Hatoba is significantly more "out there" musically than the Boredoms are; they veer from weird surfy rock to noodling vibrato guitar and wiggly keyboard lines. There's no way to predict what sounds will pop up on this CD: mouth harp and drums open "CD Planets," for example, while "Pola" has a rhythm break using patch cord static. Then suddenly out of the noise come crystalline keyboard sounds, and a strong fuzzy trash-rock song develops. The beauty of Omoide Hatoba lies in not knowing what will happen during a song, but knowing that you can rely on it being interesting, weird, and fun. In keeping with OH's determined unpredictability, the liner notes list 12 tracks but the CD itself contains 15 tracks. Guests include Yuka Shindo and the Boredoms' Eye Yamatsuka.



Omoide Hatoba

"Livers & Giggers"

CD, Japan Overseas, JO94-2

As mentioned above, here is the 5th Omoide Hatoba CD, constructed from live recordings. The reason I say constructed is that Yamamoto took recordings from six years of live performances and collaged them into one long track here (note that the CD's name is "Livers" as in "Live-ers," not the bodily organ). Due to the time span involved, the weirdness of the band itself, and the collaging process, this release could easily

give one a severe case of multiple-personality disorder. At about four minutes in you get a straight-forward (though pretty raw) blues tune. A little later you get a twisted version of "Pop Music" which I was fortunate enough to see the band do live in Tokyo in 1992, with the Ruins' Tatsuya Yoshida brought out of the audience to do vocals, and Dowser's Nagashima on keyboards. I must admit that there's some stuff on here which I find a little too retarded and silly, but overall I think you get a pretty good feel for the band's willingness to experiment and play whatever they hell they feel like at the time. It's a refreshing thing.

**Barre Phillips/Keiji Haino/
Sabu Toyozumi**

CD, P.S.F. Records, PSFD-45

Four long tracks of dark atmospheric improvisation by this trio, with Phillips on bass, Haino on guitar, and Toyozumi on drums. The playing here is very impressionistic — I have the sense that it's not structure being sought after, but something closer to pure expression. To my ears the resulting sounds aren't always cohesive, but at times there are admirable conjunctions of playing. For example, towards the end of "On Politics & Economy," the interworking of pinging guitar with murmuring bass and lightly-tapped snare drum is beautifully ominous. Likewise, the squeaking guitar textures and deep bass in "Kôka" mix very nicely. But there are other moments when the players don't quite seem to be working together as well. At those times, while the individual sounds are often still very intriguing, I don't feel as though I'm listening to a unit. This CD is a good document with some occasionally beautiful moments, but isn't all it could have been.

PIZZICATO FIVE MADE in USA 



Pizzicato Five
"Made in USA"

CD, Matador Records, OLE 099-2

This ultra-hip pop group has been hailed by some as the newest U.S. import from Japan, though it would be difficult, if even possible, to compare them with the other big names like the Boredoms and Zeni Geva. The group has actually been active since releasing a couple of 12" EPs in '85 and '86, making this something like their twelfth full album. Other reviews, and their bio sheet, have compared Pizzicato Five to Deee-Lite and the Pet Shop Boys, but those are really only surface comparisons. Yes, much of the music here is in a similar vein of immaculate pop music, driven by synthesizers, but the almost shameless adoption of hooks and tiny melodic passages from older pop songs here places Pizzicato Five in a different context. I'm not only talking about use of samples (though there's plenty of that as well), but less obvious use of past pop song methodologies and arrangements. The credits state that "Sweet Soul Revue" contains an 'interpolation' of "Dance to the Music," which is a good way of putting it. Pizzicato Five have listened to a lot of music, and they have 'interpolated' that listening into an album of pop songs which sound fiendishly familiar to anyone who grew up during the past twenty years. The lyrics are either extraordinarily silly, or ironic; or both. It depends on attitude, I

suppose. I find them to be ironic jabs at popular culture, complete with a musical interview with singer Maki Nomiya. The importance of ultra-modern, over-the-top fashion in the group's image is the final element in the recipe. Whether or not they'll manage to become more than a cute cult item in the U.S. remains to be seen. If clever lounge-song synth-pop music sounds like fun, you should check this out. There's no denying the catchiness of tunes like "Sweet Soul Revue" and "Magic Carpet Ride," the latter probably the most successful song here.

Ruins

"Graviyaunosch"

CD, N.G., NG-D03

More drum-bass mind-boggling shit from the infamous Ruins duo. Nine tracks, a couple of which have previously appeared elsewhere; the last three on the CD were recorded live and include a personal favorite, "B.U.G." Can't have too many versions of that song in my collection. The studio tracks were recorded by Steve Albini, not that it necessarily matters. The first, and title, track opens in a more free-sounding flailing manner than usual for the Ruins, but then after a few minutes develops into a repeated drumroll-bass-vocal squawk over a steady kick rhythm. Of course, in a Ruins track nothing stays the same for very long, and soon we're off into no-man's land again. It's hopeless to describe what's on here, really. Suffice it to say that if you're a Ruins fan, this will not disappoint you in the slightest. If you're not a Ruins fan, this may be a good and inexpensive introduction. If you have a nagging feeling in the back of your mind that the combination of drums, bass and vocals may be inherently limited, think again and find out the reality herein.



Ruins + Kazutoki Omezu
Cassette, F.M.N. Sound Factory,
FSF-009

Some wild stuff combining the Ruins bass/drum attack with savagely squawking saxophone from Kazutoki Omezu, recorded live in Kyoto in 1993. There are recognizable Ruins tracks in here, given a greater dimension of cacophonous magnitude with the brass addition. There are admittedly some moments where it seems as though there's not a good place to insert the sax, and it flails around without glueing; but for the most part it's an admirable addition, and Omezu becomes a part of the rhythmic churning. Cool shit. The recording quality lacks a little oomph, but not much. The sax rules the high end most of the time, of course, with Yoshida's drums and Masuda's bass pinning down the lower quadrant of the band. This is essential for Ruins fans who might be curious what happens when a new participant gets ground up in the works.



Shizuka

"Heavenly Persona"

CD, P.S.F. Records, PSFD-52

File this beautiful CD somewhere between the hazy dreaminess of the best 4AD releases and the meaty psychedelic fuzziness of Fushitsusha and other Japanese "psychedelic" bands. Mix in a bit of madrigal and traditional folksongs in a wash of reverb, and you're getting the idea of what's up here. The opening track is a deceptively noisy feedback-psych jam, which then calms into the second track's gentle plucked guitar below Shizuka's chanted vocals. Others include some very flighty almost pop-sweet numbers, but the guitar has a way of suddenly sweeping up into some amazing fuzzed-out acrobatics, courtesy of Miura Maki (also known for his contributions to Fushitsusha). The strings on the sixth track are particularly effective, and add a beautiful, yet uneasy, atmosphere to Shizuka's plaintive vocals. Some people might find her voice to be not quite perfect, which is true. Yet its imperfections perhaps add an emotional edge which an over-polished voice would eliminate. I particularly like the moments where the harsh, chaotic guitar intermixes with the melodic elements. The method is similar to that used on the Slap Happy Humphrey album, but the prac-

tice is quite different. This is a very fine album, and I'll look forward to more.

Slap Happy Humphrey

"Slap Happy Humphrey"

CD, Alchemy Records, ARCD-071

Slap Happy Humphrey is a collaboration featuring Jojo from Hijokaidan, Mineko from Angel'in Heavy Syrup, and Fujiwara from Subvert Blaze. Jojo describes this as "noisy folk song band" and that's pretty accurate. Here are eight songs that attempt to blend tender ballads with high-distortion noise; for my taste a winning combination! Fujiwara flawlessly plays acoustic guitar in a very European classical style, Mineko is her distinctive, plaintive and dreamy self (all lyrics in Japanese), and Jojo insinuates his sonic attack throughout like the good King of Noise that he is (that rascal).

Songs from Slap Happy Humphrey's *Public Bath 7"* and their first recording for the "Ayuku-Jinmin Battle Royal" CD (a wonderfully strange compilation of Alchemy recording artists covering the likes of Black Sabbath, Can, Elvis Presley, etc) appear here in new, alternative mixes. Generally, Slap Happy Humphrey's songs sound like stripped-down Angel'in Heavy Syrup minus the acid-drenched psychedelic (think Hendrix) grunge; whatever semblance of psychedelia is present is due to Jojo's being clearly influenced by early German prog-rock. Jojo's sonic mayhem works well with the precise, conventional structures that Fujiwara and Mineko lay down. Jojo has an amazing innate ability to work what appears to be atonal noise in with music that has a strong chordal base; what's actually happening is that Jojo instinctively finds a sound that, because of the harmonic overtones inherently present in distortion (wide bands of various frequencies), is consonant with the root

RELAPSE = MAILORDER

CAT# TITLE CD CS LP EP TS LS

ARCANA COLESTIA					
3084 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
VIDUA OBMANA: CONTROLLED BLEEDING: O YUKI CONJUGATE, ROBERT RICH, JEFF GRIENKE, PHALLUS, KEELER, and 7 more					
ARCANE DEVICE					
2953 ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA	..	..	..	..	..
3276 DIABOLUS EX MACHINA	..	..	..	..	..
3151 VIRGIN BIRTH	..	..	..	..	..
ARCANE DEVICE/PCR					
2978 SPLIT	..	..	..	..	..
ARCHON SATANI					
3938 MEMENTO MORI	..	..	..	..	..
2946 MIND OF FLESH AND BONES	..	..	..	..	..
3151 VIRGIN BIRTH	..	..	..	..	..
ARRHYTHMIA II					
2760 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
CRASH WORKSHOP: TRANCE: ILLUSION OF SAFETY, and more!					
ASMUS TIETCHENS/ARCANE DEVICE					
4322 DBL + FDBK	..	..	..	..	..
AS YET UNTITLED					
3623 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
JBA: ARCANE DEVICE: THE HATERS: ILLUSION OF SAFETY, and 11 more!					
ASCENSION					
3603 FIVE TITLES	..	..	..	..	..
1654 TWO TITLES	..	..	..	..	..
ASMUS TIETCHENS					
4305 SINKENDE SCHWIMMER	..	..	..	..	..
ATOM INFANT INCUBATOR					
3331 COPULA	..	..	..	..	..
AUBE					
3252 DRIP	..	..	..	..	..
3259 FLASHPOINT	..	..	..	..	..
3263 FREQUENCY FOR COLLAPSE	..	..	..	..	..
3257 LUMINOUS	..	..	..	..	..
3250 SPINDRIFT	..	..	..	..	..
3262 SUBMURGED TENSION REMIX	..	..	..	..	..
BEEQUEEN					
2722 DER HOLZWIG	..	..	..	..	..
3317 TIME WAITS FOR NO ONE	..	..	..	..	..
BLACK STATE CHOIR					
3820 PERMACULTURE	..	..	..	..	..
BRIGHTER DEATH NOW					
3066 GREAT DEATH BOX SET	..	..	..	..	..
3986 SLAUGHTERHOUSE	..	..	..	..	..
BRUME					
3159 EMERGENCE - 2X CASS	..	..	..	..	..
3162 HUMAINS	..	..	..	..	..
3561 MUSIQUE POUR LES...	..	..	..	..	..
3458 NO-THING	..	..	..	..	..
2968 PERMAFROST	..	..	..	..	..
3562 TEMPORARY PIGMENTS	..	..	..	..	..
3563 THE SUN	..	..	..	..	..
3146 XEROS	..	..	..	..	..
CANDIRU					
6054 UNLOVED AND WEED OUT	..	..	..	..	..
1017 DISADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE	..	..	..	..	..
CANDIRU/FAT HACKER					
1163 SPLIT	..	..	..	..	..
CHOP SHOP					
3971 TENSION, CHARGE, DISCHARGE - 3" CD	..	..	..	..	..
COME AGAIN					
2616 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
CON DEMEK					
3016 HAPPY ORDEAL	..	..	..	..	..
CON-DOM					
3981 ACTS OF FAITH - 3" CD	..	..	..	..	..
CONTAGIOUS ORGASM					
3152 VOLTAGE CONTROLLED FILTER	..	..	..	..	..
CRANIOCLAST					
3201 ICONCLASTER	..	..	..	..	..
3202 ICONCLASTER PT 2	..	..	..	..	..
3436 KOITLARANSK & RATION SKALK	..	..	..	..	..
CRAWL UNIT					
1544 REMAINS	..	..	..	..	..
DEAD WORLD					
6051 COLLUSION	..	..	..	..	..
1022 SELF TITLED	..	..	..	..	..
6049 THE MACHINE	..	..	..	..	..
6073 THIS WILL HURT SOMEONE	..	..	..	..	..
DEATH ODORS					
3214 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
ARCHON SATANI, INANNA, THE GREYWOLVES, CONSONO, AND AUDIO DIE					
DEDICATION					
2155 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
CHOP SHOP, SMALL CRUEL PARTY, FREUDWERK, HUKKADAN, and 10 more!					
DEUTSCH NEPAL					
3068 BENEVOLENCE	..	..	..	..	..
3119 DEFAGRATION OF HEIL	..	..	..	..	..
3839 TOLERANCE	..	..	..	..	..
DISSECTING TABLE					
2947 ULTIMATE PSYCHOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION	..	..	..	..	..
2943 ZIGOKU	..	..	..	..	..
DOMINATOR					
3015 II	..	..	..	..	..
EMPIRICAL SLEEPING CONSORT					
3134 I'VE GOT TEARS IN MY EARS	..	..	..	..	..
EN HALVKOKT I FOLIE					
3382 THE TOTALLY OUT MUSIC OF	..	..	..	..	..
ETANT DONNES					
3137 AUBORE	..	..	..	..	..
3141 ROYAUME	..	..	..	..	..
EXTREME MUSIC FROM JAPAN					
4282 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
FRAGMENTED					
3286 THE SOLENN DRAIN	..	..	..	..	..
G-PARK					
2224 YACK PARK	..	..	..	..	..

CAT# TITLE CD CS LP EP TS LS

GEROGERIGE					
170 INDIENS IMMUTATION	..	..	..	..	..
3767 HOTEL ULTRA	..	..	..	..	..
3768 INSTRUMENTS DISORDER	..	..	..	..	..
4304 LIVE - GREATEST HITS	..	..	..	..	..
1660 SENZURI FIGHT BACK	..	..	..	..	..
4302 SENZURI POWER UP	..	..	..	..	..
3361 SINGLES 85-93	..	..	..	..	..
1635 YELLOW TRASH BAZOOKA	..	..	..	..	..
GLOD					
3204 SELF TITLED	..	..	..	..	..
GNOMEAN HAIGONAIMEAN					
4271 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
CRANIOCLAST: ARCANE DEVICE, BRUME, ETANT DONNES, and 8 more!					
GRAE-COM/MACRONYMPHA					
2737 SPT LP	..	..	..	..	..
GREY WOLVES/SHOCKCITY					
2963 PUNISHMENT	..	..	..	..	..
GRILL					
3812 SELF TITLED	..	..	..	..	..
HANDS TO					
2833 HANDS TO TURN MY HANDS TO	..	..	..	..	..
2245 SFO	..	..	..	..	..
HANGED MAN'S ORGASM					
1646 SELF TITLED	..	..	..	..	..
HEAVY ELECTRONICS					
3158 VARIOUS ARTISTS - 3 CASS BOX SET	..	..	..	..	..
ADVOKAT IHER HOHEIT, DEUTSCH NEPAL GENOCIDE ORGAIN, CON-DOM THE GREY WOLVES, and BRIGHTER DEATH NOW!					
IN SLAUGHTER NATIVES					
2942 ENTER NOW THE WORLD	..	..	..	..	..
2941 SELF TITLED	..	..	..	..	..
3079 SACROSANCTS BLEED	..	..	..	..	..
INANNA					
3161 ORDER OV FECUNDATION	..	..	..	..	..
2945 STORM I-III	..	..	..	..	..
INCAPACITANTS					
1187 ALCOHOLIC SPECULATION	..	..	..	..	..
INTRINSIC ACTION					
2948 SADO-ELECTRICS	..	..	..	..	..
ISHIKAWA, CHU					
3171 TETSUO SOUNDTRACK	..	..	..	..	..
ISOLUBIN BK					
2294 CRASH INJURY TRAUMA	..	..	..	..	..
JOURNEY INTO PAIN					
3157 VARIOUS ARTISTS - 4 CASS BOX SET	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW, NULL, THE HATERS, CONTROLLED BLEEDING, THE HANATRASH, P16, D4, GEROGERIGE/MUSIMGALZE, CRANIOCLAST, MASONNA, AUTOPIA, and much more!!					
K2/HATERS					
1708 SPLIT - 7"	..	..	..	..	..
KINGDOM OF NOISE					
0014 VARIOUS ARTISTS - VIDEO!	..	..	..	..	..
LAND OF THE RISING NOISE					
2758 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW, DISSECTING TABLE, AUBE, C.C.C., and more!					
LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS					
3387 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
DEUTSCH, NEPAL, MUSIMGALZE, MORTHOUD, VIDUA OBMANA, and 7 more!					
LILLE ROGER					
3336 GOLDEN SHOWERS	..	..	..	..	..
LULL					
4216 COLD SUMMER	..	..	..	..	..
2613 DREAMT ABOUT DREAMING	..	..	..	..	..
1189 FACE	..	..	..	..	..
2514 JOURNEY THROUGH UNDERWORLDS	..	..	..	..	..
1600 SILENCED OUTERBOUNDS	..	..	..	..	..
MANDIBLE CHATTER					
2844 DRINKING OUT THE HOURGLASS	..	..	..	..	..
3365 HAIR HAIR LOCK & LORE	..	..	..	..	..
MASONNA					
0020 LIKE A VIRGIN T.V. - VIDEO!	..	..	..	..	..
3181 MADEMOISELLE ANNE SANGLANTE	..	..	..	..	..
1536 MASONNANE VIVA LOS ANGELES	..	..	..	..	..
3614 NOSKI IN ANA	..	..	..	..	..
MB					
3349 AKTIVITAT	..	..	..	..	..
2962 INDUSTRIAL MURDER	..	..	..	..	..
MELT-BANANA					
1642 HEDGEHOG	..	..	..	..	..
3479 SPEAK SQUEAK CREAK	..	..	..	..	..
MENGRAD/PSYGRAM					
3065 DREAMSHOW (SPLIT)	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW					
2967 ANTIMONUMENT	..	..	..	..	..
1694 ELECTROPLATATION	..	..	..	..	..
3003 METAL MAD MAN	..	..	..	..	..
1706 NIL VAGINA FOR MICE	..	..	..	..	..
2116 SPIRITUAL HEAD	..	..	..	..	..
6910 VENEREBOLOGY	..	..	..	..	..
2115 VENEREBOLOGY	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW/HATERS					
4168 SPLIT	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW/HATERS/AMK					
4675 SNIPER	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW/HEEMAN					
3195 THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS	..	..	..	..	..
MERZBOW/WOLLSCHIED					
4307 LIVE COLLABORATION	..	..	..	..	..
MONDE BRUTS					
3921 PORTUGUESE MAN OF WAR	..	..	..	..	..
3256 PSYCHOSOMATIC PERFORMANCE	..	..	..	..	..
3251 PURGATORY	..	..	..	..	..
3568 SELECTED NOISE WORKS 93-94	..	..	..	..	..
MUSIC TO BE MURDERED BY					
3149 VARIOUS ARTISTS	..	..	..	..	..
DOMINIQUE PETITGAIND, GENSTRAIT, LAURENT PERNICE, GRILL, N.L.C., INOX, LAURENT PETITGAIND, JAGGERNAUT, and more!					

key. (Unfortunately, this fact is lost on noise-purists who don't find the dreamy, folky ballads to their jaded tastes and atrophied sensibilities; too bad.)

Mineko's voice sparkles bouyantly in her careful, tender delivery reminiscent of Claudine Lonette or Yvonne Elliman. The song arrangements also merit comparisons to Gainsbourg *chansons*, Sandy Denny, Death in June, early Clannad, Sarah MacLachlan, or Penelope Houston. One song even sounds like "Eres Tu," the Spanish pop song! The pristine, emotional intertwining of guitar, violin, vocal, and keyboards effectively evokes a hallucinatory nostalgia that is enthralling (a quality also successfully achieved by Kathleen Yearwood, a Canadian artist who also injects noise into lilting Irish-styled folk-rock).

For those of you who like their pretty music chased with shots of bracing, jarring noise (magnificent execution of two contrasting elements into one intense articulation) — or vice-versa — Slap Happy Humphrey is definitely IT! (Elden M.)



Soap-Jo Henshi

"Soap-Jo Henshi"

CD, Soap, Soap-9201

Self-titled first CD (and only release thus far aside from a 7" single on Public Bath as far as I know), with seven guitar-bass-drum tracks which vary from straight-forward pop-rock to

rhythmic silly songs. The core of the band is two women, Nacky (drums) and Takayama (bass, vocals). The guitar spot in the band revolves, and lately has in fact been filled not by guitar but by a second bass player, Tim Olive of Nimrod fame. On this CD four different guitarists were used; this actually doesn't cause the multiple-personality disorder that might be expected, as the songs were written around the bass-

the festivities with the Streakings' trademarked whizzing synthetic sounds and hyper-speed rhythms, before the guitar and bass kick in and they start rocking out. Of course, in their case, rocking out involves blasts of saxophone, weird sampled sounds, turntable interjections, and rhythmic changes with no notice whatsoever. "Zurineta (Never Listen/For DiscoAttacker Only)" finishes side A of the cassette in a particularly



drum duo. Perhaps the main focus of the band, though, is Takayama's voice, which annoys some people I know but I love it. Her singing is an off-kilter, squeaky sort of care-free vocalization which is hard to describe. I'm actually unsure if this CD is still available, but I hope so. We'll cross our fingers for more in the future.

Space Streakings

"7-Toku"

CD, Skin Graft, GR-18

With the follow-up album to "Hatsu-Koi," Space Streakings return, once again at full-speed. Because I'm reviewing this on a promo cassette, and because of the weird way the songs come and go, it's impossible for me to connect titles with songs accurately, with a few exceptions. "F.O.J.K." opens

experimental fashion, mixing weird sounds and vocal cutups in a joyous way. Side B continues with "Kai Kai Scratch," "Surf on 7thbeat" and "Noruze Thriller car," among others. If you've heard Space Streakings before, you can be confident that this release continues their evolution into areas of techno-punk-jazz-spazz whose existence has never before even been suspected, let alone mined in this sort of brazen way. The fact that the only other band I can think of which approaches this kind of stylistic blurring is the awesome Peril (featuring Otomo Yoshihide) indicates that there's a level of genius required to attempt this which might simply guarantee glorious results. So far, so good, anyway.



大陸男対山脈女

"Perfect Hell"

CD, SSE Records, SSE 4034CD

This is the first CD from this project, which includes Tatsuya Yoshida of the Ruins and Atsushin Tsuyama of Omoide Hatoba, as well as many others. The name, Tairiku Otoko vs Sanmyaku Onna, means "Continental Man vs Mountain Woman." In this unit, Yoshida plays bass instead of drums most of the time, but his vocals are still present on most of the tracks. Other guests on the CD include Keiji Haino, Masashi Kitamura, and Tetsuo Furudate. The music bears similarities to the Ruins, but only in the sometimes frenetic pacing and ever-mutating rhythms. The traditional song "Spain," for example, was arranged by Yoshida and alternates between quiet moments and Naked City-like spazz-outs. "Strong Kiosk" has a cool keyboard melody with a strong rhythm and a bass sound that reminds me strongly of the Ruins use of high, buzzing sounds. This CD has a strong sense of humor throughout, with goofy moments aplenty such as the silly sounds at the opening of "Child in Moonmadness" before the music turns dramatic. Not surprisingly, the band is very tight, and the production is perfectly clear. Great stuff.



37564

"37564 Keikaku"

CD, Murder, Murder CD-1919

Cool, short CD of heavy rock by three women: Zaison (vocals, guitar); Kshr (bass); and Miho (drums). The vocals are harsh, spat out with a venom that would give Babes in Toyland a run for their money. The songs are a bit formulaic at times, with a predictable 1-2-1-2 rhythm and the obligatory solo/break in the middle, but they move along with a strong energy. "Let's Die" gives the vocals a cool processing which makes Zaison sound like a demon speaking in evil tongues, and it works for me. "Survivor?" opens with a slow, throbbing bass, with the guitar as a sheet of white noise over it before the drums kick the song into a pulsating, head-bobbing slo-mo crush; after a minute, the tempo is upped to full-speed. This is pretty cool shit, and the booklet has some impressively grotesque manga drawings, too. Check it out.

Violent Onsen Geisha

"Shocks! Shocks! Shocks! Remix '93"
CD, Ring Music, RMCD-001

This is also sub-titled "Vanilla cassette CD reissue series Vol: 1" — Ring Music has further reissues of Vanilla's cassette releases planned for the future, which we will look forward to eagerly. This CD contains the 1991 cassette by the now-infamous Violent Onsen

Geisha, plus a 20-minute bonus track, so how can you go wrong? The packaging is rather minimal, but given the bargain price, it's just as well; it makes this CD about the same price as the original cassette from Japan sold for! As far as the sounds go, this is a primitive, high-energy and high-imagination VOG, showing all of the hallmarks of their trademark audio frenzy. They shamelessly steal, plunder and loot recordings from pop music, rap, and whatever else suits their fancy, chop them up, and layer other obnoxious noises and sounds over them. "Anal Machine Music (featuring teenage Chuck D)," for instance, plops down an instrumental funk groove intact, and adds the most annoying high-pitched tone available, making it exceptionally difficult to listen to. "V.O.G. and History of Mortown Sound" (sic) assimilates Motown recordings and spits out a blenderized conglomeration of sounds worthy of note for their schizophrenic value. None of this is quite as accomplished, quite as violently amazing as VOG's later releases "Excrete Music" and "Otis," but it's nonetheless a valuable and tasty treat.

Volkha Dots

"Vast, and Wriggle Music"

Cassette, Mind Loop, C1003

This group's background is a mystery to me, but I saw the tape at a store in Osaka and was intrigued. The four members handle vocals, bass, guitar, sax, effects, and "flu" which I suspect means flute. All of the tracks on this C-46 were recorded as live takes, which makes the somewhat mystical atmospheres they create even more impressive. Tomoko Mikata's vocals are quite pretty, and the interplay between her bass and Kobayashi's guitar is simple and pleasant. There's a sort of eastern feeling to the guitar work which lends the music a peculiarly exotic flavor which I like quite a



Various Artists

"Dance 2 Noise 005"

CD, Victor Entertainment Inc

Don't overlook this compilation CD just because of the cyber/techno artwork with its ultra-slick computer-manipulated explosion of phantasmagoric colors. Actually, the cover art of this CD is as well-done as the newest premium American baseball cards (like Fleer Ultra, Topps Stadium Club, etc) — state of the art design!

When CDs were first made commercially-available, people complained (and still do) about losing the visual impact of LP-sized artwork, but looking at this CD (and the latest sports cards which are about *half* the size of a CD cover), you'll realize just how primitive current designs for CD artwork are. Look at what American card manufacturers offer today's collectors on a measly 2.5 inch by 3.5 inch card: gold or silver foil stamping, laser-etched foil, prismatic layering, 3-D holography, refraction or Dufex technology, crisp multi-photo montages, triple UV coating, authentic hand-signed star's autographs, etc. Compared to sports card designs, CD artwork is still in the Dark Ages!

But of course the artwork is not the main reason to buy a CD... "Dance 2 Noise

005" is an excellent sampler of relatively new or obscure Japanese pop groups covering some familiar rock classics. These songs in various updated styles, uniquely mutated as only Japanese genius can do, are sure to surprise listeners.

The first track, by Ninja Head, starts off with a house techno-dub intro ("oh no, bleep bleepy Roland Bass-Line!"), which will mislead you into thinking that this is just another major-label techno comp of weak electronic snoozers; but midway through this first track things change abruptly when a rousing electro tinker-toy version of the Ramones' "Rock and Roll Radio" bursts forward to slam into you (like your first hearing of the Residents or Devo) — don't hold back from pogoing!

There's Brain Drive's Wax Traxy send-up of the Kink's "You Really Got Me" that rivals RevCo's "Let's Get Physical" or 1000 Homo DJs "Supernaut." Nav Katze are two doe-eyed and fragile-looking women who sing an Appalachian-sounding harmony of John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" over a mechanical, slightly atonal dub loop. It's kind of like Bill Monroe fronted by Strawberry Switchblade, produced by Adrian Sherwood at Kraftwerk Studios (note: listen for the bagpipes at the end!). Nav Katze are followed by Secret Goldfish (what a fucking great name!), who turn out a college rock-oriented, but still "Tokyo Flashback" ultra-psychedelic, version of Lennon-McCartney's "Lovely Rita"; kids in torn Levis and tie-dye are dancing in Golden Gate Park (where Haight St ends)... Ray Davies' "See My Friends" gets similar treatment by the confident and muscular Paint in Watercolour. Lucy's Drive's version of "Miss Me Blind" is pretty strange, with vocal harmonies that recall Queen and

Yukihiro Takahashi, and 60s soul rhythm guitar. Next, M-Age cut in on the Flashback haze with their hardcore-techno raver that is pure Los Angeles circa 1992 (when "James Brown is Dead" was the rage at all the underground warehouse raves) — but wait! M-Age sings, and the song is...none other than Michael Jackson's "Beat It!" (the titles in Japanese characters offer no clues); wonderfully strange, and mercifully short.

This 56 minute disc closes with a bluesy rocker (by a band with a name I can't translate) that, like Angel'in Heavy Syrup's psychedelized electric-folk with dreamy girl vocals and mod guitar grunge, would seem out of place on such a techno-y package. But everything fits perfectly, because all the groups are so great at what they do. The songs are catchy, memorable classics, well-played and well-recorded; the arrangements are unique and imaginative (fantastic!). The accompanying booklet is excellent: bright, full-color photos, electronically-manipulated layouts; everything jumps out at you. Angel'in Heavy Syrup and Nav Katze look positively edible. Naz-O's black on black uniform look is a hellish Dee-Lite (female vocals by Marmalade Moai), guitar neck sticking out of the DJ's strap-worn turntable in a terrorist-ready pose.

This one really surprises me as I continue to enjoy it more and more with each listen. You may have a very hard time finding "Dance 2 Noise 005," because who imports major-label releases that sport a ¥3000 (about \$30) retail price?!? Good luck with the hunt! (Elden M.)

lot. There's a delicate, almost ghostly air to many of the songs, while others use drums and guitar to create a vaguely militaristic yet beautiful sound. The recording quality isn't superb, but it's quite adequate. An admirable cassette which is well worth seeking out.

Otomo Yoshihide

"The Blue Kite" soundtrack
CD, Trigram, S&T-001

This is the soundtrack album to the acclaimed Chinese film, by director Tian Zhuangzhuang, a film-maker from China who created this movie as the first of a trilogy about the modern history of China. Ironically, despite winning awards at film festivals around the world, this film is still banned in its home country. The CD is an unusual soundtrack album, combining original music with sound from the movie itself. The music is haunting and beautiful — sometimes synthesizer, sometimes mandolin, sometimes toy piano or jew's harp! I found that the inclusion of sounds from the movie (sound effects, dialog, etc) makes this CD a little like listening to a digested version of the movie and less like an album of music — this can sometimes be disturbing, but of course if I want to hear only the music, I can simply program the CD player appropriately. This is an interesting piece of work.

Otomo Yoshihide

"Solo Live in Kyoto '92"
Cassette, F.M.N. Sound Factory,
FSF-005

This live tape was recorded (aside from one track) at Quest in Kyoto on November 7th, 1992, then reconstructed by Yoshihide and mastered in September of 1993. He played turntables, CD player, and guitar, which is quite impressive given the range of sounds created here. It opens with a funky rhythm and guitar noises, kind of a free improv style squeal and squawk. The second track is pure Yoshihide, cutting up bits of

spoken words, piano playing, and static in a frenetic, schizoid way. Other tracks have everything from plucked guitar to interjected sax, squeaking jazzy horns, cartoon music, looped voices, and other unidentifiable sounds. At times the cuts seem a bit random and hence can be annoying, but usually the collages are handled well, and with a sense of humor at times which makes it an enjoyable listen almost all of the time. Personally I think it's a bit of a shame that Yoshihide edited the live recordings, since I would have welcomed the chance to hear what it really sounded like for the audience. On the other hand, I can understand the temptation to take the opportunity to rework the live recordings into something new and perhaps closer to the artist's actual vision, and when the results are this much fun, that's great.



Various Artists

"Benten Bentoh"
CD, Benten Label, BNTN-003

From the Benten Label, home of only "girl groups" as they say, comes this compilation with tracks from nine such bands. Most of the groups get two songs included. Droop contribute "We are baby Droop," which is a great Dickies-like punk song with what does indeed sound like a baby girl singing. Way cool. Their other track, "I am Go," is more normal; it's good enough, but it's unfortunately not the same great singer. Lolita 18-go are next, with "Moeru

Untensha," a slow, harsh, painful and cool song with a nice noisy ending. "Wani" is very different; it's cheerful pop-punk with cutesy vocals. Strange dichotomy here. The Flamenco a GoGo work both of their songs in a smooth fuzzy punk vein with nice harmonizing vocals. Guinny Vamps, my favorites on this CD, present "Things" in a dark Cramps style, and "Caution," which is very cool retro-fuzz rock. Choosey Mojo Bees have the best name, but their songs feel very thin; sort of boppy punk with squeaky vocals. Noodles are definitely the most mainstream band on here; their first song, "Mellow Metallica," reminds me of Blondie in a way, but a bit too ordinary. Love Pigs sing straightforward punk with English lyrics. "Birth" is the harder of their two songs, with more powerful vocals. Super Junky Monkey only get one song, "Po Po Bar," but it's a very cool one, something like the Red Hot Chili Peppers stripped down, with a punk rock background. The infamous performance-art group Super Ball finish the CD with a 23 second miniature piece of squeaking toys and voices. This is a good compilation which goes beyond merely being an item for those curious about Japan's "girl groups" and serves as an introduction to some just plain interesting groups.

Various Artists

"Eternal Blue Extreme"
CD, Somnus Productions, SM-001
Nice boxed CD package of Asian artists, dedicated to Derek Jarman. A bit of a strange concept, but a nice one nonetheless. The producer, Alex Chong, admits in his liner notes that "this album does not sound like a tribute album" — but he says that the compilation was directed in a manner similar to that which Jarman used in directing his films: by giving the artists freedom to follow their own instincts. In addition, each track title contains the word "blue," which was important to

Jarman. Most of the artists here work with noise rather than melody. Merzbow's "Marfan Syndrome For Blue" opens the compilation with an explosive, roaring mass of distortion and feedback. C.C.C.C. contributes a rumbling, slowly-building piece which is calmer and more dramatic than their usual dense work; it's an excellent piece. Juno, from Hong Kong, constructed a cut-up piece using voices and electronics; Otomo Yoshihide offers two pieces. The first is a quiet, spacey work that opens with a woman speaking, while the second is an energetic song using sampled grindcore guitar, cut-up and reassembled over a beat. I.666, from Hong Kong, layer fuzzy noise over a clanking metal percussion. Aube's "From the Deep in Blue" starts slowly, with deep gurgling water sounds and a chunky slow rhythm; over the duration of the piece, the sounds become denser and more frantic. PNF, from Hong Kong, cut up severely-distorted noise, and spew out hunks of it in fine style, including recognizable fragments of Zeni Geva and other artists. Very entertaining. Taiwan's Z.S.L.O. close out the album with a very annoying track using something like a game show sound, with laughter, applause, and a truly obnoxious host. Unbearable, especially for over eight minutes. However, the quality of the other tracks on here more than makes up for this last piece, especially for fans of harsh sounds, who might find some new names here.

Various Artists

"Galaxy & Nu Beauty"

CD, SSE Records, SSE 4002

This isn't a new release, but it's a useful compilation for those looking to check out some of the artists that SSE and others have worked with. The twelve tracks here include rock (from progressive to jazzy), techno, and dreamy sounds. Katsurei (circumcision)

open with a slow rocker, "Oboreppanashi," (loosely "continual drowning") recorded live at Tokyo's La Mama club. At almost fifteen minutes long, there's a lot of space for this to stretch out into a psychedelic jam which doesn't quite have enough bite to it for me. YBO² begin their track with keyboards and bass, then build into a total spaced-out jam with stabbing guitar. Yagi-Inu (Goat-Dog) contribute "Yapu's Will," an unevenly-rhythmed rocker with sax, and a weird break in the middle with strange laughter. Definitely unusual. Kuroyuri Shimai (Dark Lily Sisters) are one of the highlights here, with two tracks. The first, "Nemuri," (Sleep) has a slow bassy rhythm and a beautiful women's vocal chorus; the second has gorgeous vocals over piano, giving it a wonderful chamber music feel. UFO or Die provide a rhythmic noisy break, with their usual combination of confusing sounds and screaming vocals courtesy of Eye Yamatsuka of the Boredoms. 662's track is a disappointing new-wavey kind of techno with high-speed cheesy rhythms. Ixa-Wud's two tracks are a strange combination of Birthday Partyish rhythms and spazzy-jazzy rock. Interesting stuff. Walt-Fall contribute a silly lounge-rock thing with sax, piano, and pretty silly vocals. Didn't do much for me. Ita-Roh (loosely Painful Man) present a track of pretty ordinary rock. Children Coup d'Etat finish the CD with one of their cool art-rock pieces. It begins slow, with violin, then speeds up into a fast spazzy thrash song. Very nice. The CD has a sort of techno-looking cover without any track information on the back, which may make some people reluctant to pick it up, but as an overview of various groups and styles, it's a useful addition to your music library.



Various Artists

"Mi Caballito Chulo...! Como lo Quie Ro..."

CD, ¿Los Apson?, LOS-0001

This is one of the weirdest collections of sounds I've heard in recent memory. We've got a compilation with 37 tracks, about 75 minutes long, and all of it's bizarre. There are a few well-known names here like Violent Onsen Geisha, Yoshimi, Hanatarash, Pain Jerk, Melt-Banana, and Merzbow but I've never heard of most of these 'groups'. All of the tracks are rather short, and they veer from incoherent yelling and drum-banging to bleeping electronic sounds, from doodling xylophones and acoustic guitar to harsh noise, from strange collages to garage-surf-band versions of the Twilight Zone theme. This is either the most amazingly twisted compilation I've ever heard or one of the worst collections of fucked-up losers I've ever heard. I tend to lean towards the former, as this CD is really fun to listen to, but I know some folks disagree with me. To top it all off, the booklet is simply clippings from Mexican wrestling magazines. Go figure...



Various Artists

"Thrashing Deathpower"

CD, Selfish Records

"To the Marrow - Japanese Deathnology"

CD, Toy's Factory

These two compilation CDs serve as an excellent introduction to Japanese grindcore and death-metal. "Thrashing Deathpower" features three fairly well-known bands (each doing a few songs): Multiplex, Satanic Hell Slaughter, and Gibbed. "To the Marrow" also features Multiplex and Satanic Hell Slaughter, as well as Hell Child, Eroded, Transgressor (not to be confused with the European band on Black Mark Records), The Equinox, Maggoty Corpse, Voidd and Terror Fector (single-track contributions from each band). These CDs show off the state of the Japanese underground, which has a rich and varied legacy dating back to G.I.S.M. and S.O.B. "Thrashing Deathpower," by its packaging and fidelity, is a very underground ("indie") release; fans of dark and brutal hardcore bands such as Assuck, Man is the Bastard, and Exit 13 will want to get this. "To the Marrow" will appeal to fans of more "mainstream" speedmetal like Napalm Death and Sepultura.

By the examples on these CDs, grindcore and deathmetal from Japan is the same as the hard and fast, high-energy sounds popular with young metalheads

all over the world. This is loud, crunching, brutal grinding rock as purveyed by European and American labels such as Earache, Relapse, Nuclear Blast, RoadRunner, Century Media, Peaceville, etc. Some of these bands have releases outside Japan or contributions on international compilations, and are familiar to listeners everywhere.

On "Thrashing Deathpower," Multiplex is my personal favorite, in part because of their excellent full-length CD "Multiplex World," and they really remind me of S.O.B. Theirs is brutally hard grinding music with thrashy hardcore guitar, superfast drumming, and croaking low vocals. Satanic Hell Slaughter sound very much like early Napalm Death (when they were still more hardcore than speedmetal). Gibbed (who appear on "Bleeeeeaaaauurrrgghh!," Slap-a-Ham's compilation 7-inchers) are the most underground of these bands: really dense, fuzzy and harsh grindcore with raspy vocals that sound whispered.

"To the Marrow - Japanese Deathnology" has a wider variety of bands, with cleaner, slick sounds. Even Multiplex and Satanic Hell Slaughter sound very progressive here, with strange effects such as backward tape passages, odd vocal processing, and bizarre musical breaks. Hell Child starts with weird ambient noise then proceeds to rock out (twin leads!), sounding much like Unleashed or Entombed. Transgressor and The Equinox are quintessential "Doom" bands after the style of Carcass and Cathedral: superheavy and sludgy. Terror Fector sound similar to "Black Metal" bands popular in Sweden and Norway: gothic keyboard intro gives way to ultra-speedy guitar buzzing, crashing drums and wicked, snarling vocals. Eroded, Maggoty Corpse and Voidd are very competent, muscular grindcore bands that bridge

the gap between Black Flag and Black Sabbath, Dead Kennedys and Slayer, etc.

To check out extreme and powerful music that is alternative to noise or pop — the futuristic progression from HC-punk thrash — try these two compilations. "Thrashing Deathpower" includes English lyrics; "To the Marrow" sports a foldout with band info and pictures (yes!). If you're not already familiar with this type of underground music, you may be surprised by how dynamic these cool bands are, and will want to explore this genre even further (no matter what country it's from). Be prepared for high-energy headbanging! (Elden M.)



Various Artists

"The Three Temples"

3-Cassette, G.R.O.S.S., GRS-103

This isn't really a compilation, but a collaborative effort of majestic proportions. This is a triple-cassette released in perhaps the most beautiful packaging I've ever seen for any release. Being a G.R.O.S.S. release means it will be attractive, of course, but this goes beyond that. The picture included here will give you an idea; three tapes in boxes, glued in a triangular shape to an octagonal black board, with a handsome green and black color motif. The three cassettes are, of course, the Three Temples referred to. The first, "Kinkakuji" (The Temple of the

Golden Pavilion), is a collaboration between Maso Yamazaki (aka Masonna), and Akifumi Nakajima (aka Aube, and head of the G.R.O.S.S. label). It's a collection of scary, weighty synthesizer textures, with occasional vocals by Maso. Side B is particularly intense in a horror movie, church-mass style. The second tape is "Ginkakuji" (The Temple of the Silver Pavilion), by Hiroshi Hasegawa (aka Mortal Vision, and member of C.C.C.C.) and Akifumi Nakajima. This tape is more electronic in feel, with deep rumblings and creaking, high-pitched tones. Hiroshi's sound is less psychedelic than Maso's, and more feedback and noise-oriented. The third tape is "Gokurakuji" (The Temple of the Heavenly Pavilion), and is a collaboration of all three artists. This one opens with a very analog synth piece which flashes back to the 60s/70s German electronics artists. The tape at times becomes very noisy, but there are moments of calm which allow brief relaxation, like an audio rollercoaster. This is a beautiful release and a great listen as well. Limited to only 100 copies, so it will be difficult to track it down, but it's worth the effort.

Various Artists

"TVVA: Less Than TV Sampler"
CD, Less Than TV, CH-1

This is a mostly straightforward collection of 21 indie rock bands that should certainly be investigated by fans of pop-punk sounds. Briefly listed: A1 are a sorta tuneful punk; Beyonds are ordinary fuzzy rock; Bitch Raid Drive do a cool low-fi thrashy cover of Blondie's "Call Me"; Blood Thirsty Butchers present their usual clean, fast rock; Blow One's Cool are bland college rock; Concrete Octopus present a really short Ramonesish piece; Copass Grinderz are very Mudhoney-like; Dynamite Masters Blues Quartet are hyper-fuzz low-fi plodding; Forthcoming Wind stand out a

little due to a woman singer, but otherwise are unremarkable; God's Guts are simple fast rock; Guitar Wolf does a thick noisy blues workout; Jackie & the Cedrics are cool surf music; Kimidori are unusual here, with a very silly song of weird toy instruments; Madam Montecarlo present deep, dark rock with a woman singing; Satanic Hell Slaughter provide their trademark heavy death-metal with deep growling vocals; Satori School are short and fast old-fashioned punk rock; Subracho Dobracho are very Ramones-inspired; U.G. Man contribute a bizarre short bit of shouted vocals over a sparse drum and guitar; Volume Dealers send a dense blast of guitar and vocals with a strong bassline; and Yahee finish with fast, simple rock and roll. Those folks interested in checking out the indie rock scene should consider this a good starting place.

7" Singles

Doom & Hedgehog

"Sure"/"Spare Change"

7" Single, H.G. Fact, HG-021

Doom's "Sure" opens with jangling bells, squeaky guitar sounds and pretty singing. The drums and rhythmic guitar come in, while things stay slow for a while. Then the high-speed gtr/drum thrash hits, and weird tapes and sirens mix things up. This is very cool. Hedgehog's "Spare Change" is indie rock with time changes to spare. Their second track, "Victimized," begins more slowly, with periodic stuttering bits of acceleration. Kinda cool, but unfortunately doesn't seem unique enough for me to get into it.

The Gerogerigegege

"Senzuri Fight Back"

7" Single, Turbine

Continuing their attempt to overrun the world with their noise, the Gero contribute this small slab of vinyl offal. The title track is a surprisingly ordinary rock track, though it won't win over any Pearl Jam fans. It's slower than their usual flipped-out amphetamine shit, but still noisy enough to be satisfying. About four minutes of drums, feedback and a pained sort of shouting, as if Juntaro had bad hemorrhoids. The other tracks on the single are in their more usual hyper-speed thump/squeal/shout mode.

Grubby

"Stab"/"Fellow"/"Trippin' Out"

7" Single, H.G. Fact, HG-020

Plain and simple hard rock here. "Stab" is heavy stuff with a catchy chorus that chants "Stab Me/To Death." On the B-side, "Fellow" is an unexciting metal-ish thing that reminded me unfavorably of Danzig's recent output. "Trippin' Out" is a funny song, kind of weird thrashy rock with amusing lyrics about tripping. Nothing too special here, I'm afraid.



Half Life & In/Humanity

7" Single, H.G. Fact, HG-017

Another of H.G. Fact's split singles. Half Life's "Let's Start Something" melds a slow rhythm with a chugging guitar riff and harsh shouted vocals. It's pretty

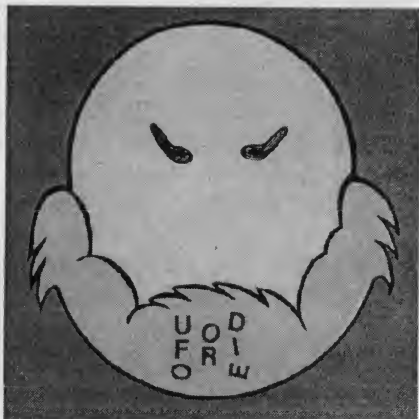
cool, but there's not much variation to the song. In/Humanity hail from the U.S., I think, and have two tracks: "Kill the Cop Inside" is a slow pounding track sorta like Tar on 'ludes, maybe. Nice lyrics on this one. "Budd Dwyer Superstar" is yet another tribute to the city councilman who was kind enough to fire a gun into his mouth on television, thereby providing fodder for innumerable bands (see Rapeman, for example). This one is nothing special; it's medium-speed repetitive riffing with screamed vocals and a tape of Dwyer's suicide.

K.K. Null

*"Cryonics"/"Winter Solstice"/
"Memes"*

7" Single, Table of the Elements, Flourine-9

In the usual distinguished packaging, we get the "Flourine" element in this label's series of releases. This is a pure sort of single, or something: white folder, white vinyl, and white-cold sounds created by the Zeni Geva leader's guitar. "Cryonics" layers alien-attack buzzings atop a looped mechanoid sound. "Winter Solstice" is well-named: these are crystalline, metallic noises like ice breaking. "Memes" is a manic piece of looped and layered guitar tinklings that bring to mind Fripp's stylistic experiments. An impressive addition to Null's ever-growing catalog of work to expand the guitar's usual repertoire of sounds.



UFO or Die

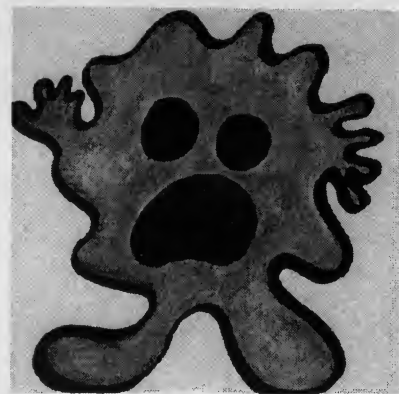
"Shock Shoppers"/"Zombie Tube"
7" Single, Skin Graft, Graft-011

This is one of Skin Graft's series of 7" singles packaged with comic books. The nice blue & white marbled vinyl has two "songs" by this Boredoms offshoot featuring Eye Yamatsuka, Yoshimi, and Osaka scenester Hayashi. "Shock Shoppers" sounds like bombs dropping, followed by a noisy rhythm, then some full-blast riffing that halts amid groans. We get one final blast and it's over. The flip side, "Zombie Tube," begins with rubbery noises, then a bass/drum rockin' bit. It breaks for some strange duck sounds, then buzzers, then drums and distorted gruntings. We're bombarded by some inexplicable sci-fi sounds, and it's done. The comic book has a comic by Eye which appeared in the first *Show-Kai* magazine (it's in Japanese with separate English translations which can be applied in any order you like), plus some other comics which are mildly amusing but not really special enough to add to the package as a whole. However, with this many odd noises on a single, who needs anything else anyway?

Volume Dealers & Older Than Dirt

7" Single, H.G. Fact, HG-016

This is one of H.G. Fact's split singles, teaming a Japanese group with a group from outside Japan. In this case, both groups work solidly in the punk end of rock. The Volume Dealers side, "Seafood Restaurant," is fast thrash rock, with a slow rhythmic break after which it takes off again, ending abruptly. England's Older Than Dirt has two songs on their side: "Too Late" is good old-fashioned punk rock with a slight metal tinge to it. "Dig Your Own Hole" veers from straight-ahead hardcore to an almost Helmet-like guitar riffing.



Yoshimi

"Two"

7" Single, Ecstatic Peace

Two ultra-short sides of tinkling sounds, slight vocal utterances and what sounds like tape manipulation. It's cute and kinda fun, but extremely brief and it's hard to tell if there's really anything going on here or not. Is there a point? Or is it just for the fuck of it? Does it matter? Perhaps this is really just an existential record, and not something to listen to after all?

Z.O.A.

"Overture to the Sun"

7" double-single, H.G. Fact, HG-006/HG-007

This double-EP set is a limited edition of 700 copies, packaged in a cool fold-out sleeve. Recorded live, this seems to be a bit of a concept mini-album, but it's a little hard to tell. Side A, "Boghaya," starts with very quiet metallic percussion and calm strumming. The drums kick in briefly then stop, and it concludes with more gentle tinkling percussion. "Overture the Sun" has biting guitar with the vocals low in the mix. Suddenly everything stops and the drums begin a heavy tom rhythm, the guitar begins strumming, and keyboards kick in, launching us into calm prog-rock territory. "Disillusive" begins with fast jabbing guitar, then a hard fast drum rhythm begins, with chanted vocals and a mean-

dering guitar line over it. It comes to an end with a memorable high-speed guitar riff. "God Knows All" concludes the set with strong bass underpinnings that allow the drums and guitar to wander around the rhythm, and vocals wail above it all. Pretty cool stuff, especially for those interested in where progressive rock might be going.

Contact Addresses:

Alchemy Records, 1-15-9-507 Nishi-Shinsaibashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka 542, Japan
Amp/Pain Jerk, c/o Kohei Gomi, 2-5-11-201 Toyotamakita, Nerima-ku, Tokyo 176, Japan
Anomalous Records, 6737 Bright Avenue, Whittier, CA 90601, U.S.A.
Bananafish, c/o Tedium House, P.O. Box 424762, San Francisco, CA 94142-4762, U.S.A.
Beast Arts, 401 Daishin Bldg 3-3-12, Midorigaoka, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 152, Japan
Benten Label, #303 LSP, 1-39-7, Sangenjaya, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 154, Japan
Bloody Butterfly, see ZK Records contact
Blurred Records, 482-1 Naka, Kambara, Ihara, Shizouka 421-32, Japan
Captain Trip, c/o Ken Matsutani, 3-17-14 Minimi-Koiwa, Edogawa-ku, Tokyo 133, Japan
Charnel Music, P.O. Box 170277, San Francisco, CA 94117-0277, U.S.A.
Crazy S-K-B, c/o Sakano, Yasuo, 2-9-34 Nanko, Chigasaki-shi 253, Japan
Dark Vinyl Records, Kettelerstrasse 4, D-95652 Waldsassen, Germany
Disques du Soleil, Matsuda Bldg 4F, 2-7-2 Sonezaki, Kita-ku, Osaka 530, Japan
D.I.Y. Records, 101-7-8-5 Ebara, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 142, Japan
Elvis Records, c/o Hiroshi Katoh, 16 Wakamatsu 19, Nakanoshima-cho, Fukakusa, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto 612, Japan
F.M.N. Sound Factory, 10 Higashi-Fukunokawa-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606, Japan
Fourth Dimension Records, P.O. Box 63, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6YU, England
Gendai Records, c/o Okaniwa Fumihiro, 3-30-3 Senzoku, Taitou-ku, Tokyo 111, Japan
Goner Records, P.O. Box 40566, Memphis, TN 38174-0566, U.S.A.
Good Microphone, 2-11-14 Kitaoutomocho, Tondabayashishi, Osaka 584, Japan
G.R.O.S.S., c/o Akifumi Nakajima, 412 Higashianekoujicho Sanjo-agaru, Furukawacho Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto 605, Japan
Gyuune, c/o Keizoh Suhara, 1-3-18 Shotenka, Nishinari-ku, Osaka 557, Japan
H.G. Fact, 401 Hongoh-M, 2-36-2 Yayoi-cho, Nakano-ku, Tokyo 164, Japan
Japan Overseas, 6-1-21 Ueshio, Tennoji-ku, Osaka 543, Japan
Kinky Musik Institute, c/o K. Kusafuka, K2FLAT 102, 1-15-11 Osu, Ichikawa-shi, Chiba 272, Japan
Less Than TV, see ZK Records contact
Long Fun, c/o Huck Finn, Ishii Bldg B1, 5-19-7 Imaike, Chigusa-ku, Nagoya 464, Japan
¿Los Apson?, 604 Daikan Plaza Bizness, Nishi-Shinjuku 7-9-15, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160, Japan

Magaibutsu Limited, Daiichi Hibariso-7, 3-35-31 Koenjikita, Suginami, Tokyo 166, Japan
 Mamarracho, c/o Shobu Saitoh, 1-11-36 Nakashirane, Asahiku, Yokohama, Kanagawa-ken 241, Japan
 Matador Records, 676 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, U.S.A.
 MCR, 157 Kamiagu Maizuru, Kyoto 624, Japan or P.O. Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017, U.S.A.
 Mediacapsule, 1-8-3 Hatsudai, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151, Japan
 Mind Loop, c/o Tomoko Mikata, 3-10-7 Uchindaicyo, Miyakojimaku, Osaka 534, Japan
 Mom'n'Dad, 203 Seifu Bldg, 2-18-12 Takamatsu, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171, Japan
 MSBR Records, c/o Koji Tano, 1-108 Anjoji, Matsuyama, Ehime 790, Japan
 Murder, c/o Yasuo Sakano, 2-9-34 Nanko, Chigasaki 253, Japan
 N.G., P.O. Box 64935, Los Angeles, CA 90061, U.S.A.
 Onkel Tuka Records, P.O. Box 1518, 56160 Bendorf, Germany
 P.S.F. Records, c/o Modern Music, Terada Bldg 2F, 2-45-11 Matsubara, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 156, Japan
 Public Bath, P.O. Box 884162, San Francisco, CA 94188-4162, U.S.A.
 Realization Recordings, 9452 Telephone Rd, No. 116, Ventura, CA 93004, U.S.A.
 Release Entertainment, P.O. Box 251, Millersville, PA 17551, U.S.A.
 Revolver USA, 290-C Napoleon, San Francisco, CA 94124, U.S.A.
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 Scatter, c/o Liam Stefani, 79 West End Park St, Glasgow, G3 6LJ, U.K.
 Sento, Ueshio 6-1-21-502, Tennoji-ku, Osaka 543, Japan
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 Somnus Productions Ltd., The Village by the Grange, 55 McCaul Street Box #138, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2W7, Canada
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 SSE Records, A Flat 1F, 2-16-2 Kitazawa, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 155, Japan
 Subterranean Records, P.O. Box 2530, Berkeley, CA 94702, U.S.A.
 Table of the Elements, P.O. Box 423838, San Francisco, CA 94142, U.S.A.
 Tag Rag, c/o Omega Sound, 3-6-10 Nakatsu, Kita-ku, Osaka 530, Japan
 Tesco Organisation, c/o Kohl, Holbeinstrasse 8, 69469 Sulzbach, Germany
 Time Bomb, Toporo 51 Bldg 3F, 2-18-18 Nishi-shinsaibashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka 542, Japan
 Trigram, 4-20-7-208 Nishiogi, Minami, Suginami, Tokyo 167, Japan
 Turbine, P.O. Box 112275, Campbell, CA 95011-2275, U.S.A.
 Vanilla Records, c/o Tejima, Michio, 1750 Sumiyoshi, Miyazu-City, Kyoto 626, Japan
 ZK Records, c/o Music Mine, 7F, 1-2-5 Higashishinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Release News

Heel Stone Records have released "Hole," the latest (as of this moment) CD by Merzbow, in a special package, limited to 500 copies (300 outside Japan). Contact them c/o Phillipp Hermisson, Lindenastr. 8, 79199 Kirchzarten, Germany.

Ant-Zen have released a series of cool 7" singles by C.C.C.C., Astro (Hiroshi of C.C.C.C.), Contagious Orgasm and the ubiquitous Gerogerigegege. All have special covers, colored vinyl, etc, and are very limited. Contact Ant-Zen c/o Salt, Lessingstr. 7a, 93049 Regensburg, Germany.

Fourth Dimension Records have released a 7" and a 10" by K.K.Null, and plan a double-LP and CD in the future in addition to their other fine releases. Write for their great mail-order catalog at P.O. Box 63, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6YU, England.

Manifold Recordings will soon release a solo CD by K.K.Null entitled "Ultimate Material III," and Null will also be featured on their upcoming "Endless 2" compilation CD. Contact at P.O. Box 12266, Memphis, TN 38182, U.S.A.

Fans of low-fi noise and flailing sounds should contact Okaniwa Fumihiko, who has been busy releasing tapes of Basshaha, Orange Lady, and his own curious recordings. Watch for reviews of some of his releases in our next issue. Contact him c/o Gendai Records (see address in Contacts listing).

Just as we're wrapping up this issue, Pain Jerk's Kohei Gomi sent in the latest Pain Jerk cassette, "Brutalica." As the intriguing cardboard holder says, "All noise thrashed by Kohei Gomi," and that sort of says it all. The usual reliable high-tension crunching

and squealing noise. Contact c/o Amp (see address in Contacts listing).

Brand-new on the noise scene is Killer Bug, who sent in their debut self-titled cassette. It's got three long tracks of totally intense over-the-top noise by Kazumoto Endo and Tsutomu Kodera, both on electronics and voice. Highly recommended to noise lovers. Contact c/o Kazumoto Endo, 2-24-1-44-402 Tokiwadaira, Matsudo, Chiba 270, Japan.

Kinky Musik Institute, home of K2, has several items planned in its series of "K2 vs..." 7" EPs. These include "K2 vs De Fabriek," "K2 vs RLW," and "K2 vs Runzilster und Gurgelstock."

Akifumi Nakajima, the man behind Aube and the G.R.O.S.S. label, is very busy. As Aube, he has recently released the "Vibrate-Flasher" 7" single on the Syntactic label; the "Huile Sur L'eau" cassette from G.R.O.S.S.; the "Purification to Numbness" CD on RRRecords' *Pure* series (with a special edition of 100 copies with handmade packaging from G.R.O.S.S.); and the "Ukiyo" CD collaboration with Die Form's Philippe Fichot on the Hyperium label. On G.R.O.S.S., recent releases include cassettes by Telepherique, Near Earth Objects, Loop Circuit, Hyware, Crawl Unit, Sympathy Nervous, and Iugula-Thor. Coming soon are releases from Quest, Sudden Infant, Skin Crime, Yellow Cab, MSBR, Pain Jerk, and more.

Manifold Records will release a new solo CD by K.K. Null, "Ultimate Material III," this summer, featuring more of Null's unique guitar work. Contact Manifold Records, P.O. Box 12266, Memphis, TN 38182, U.S.A.

Self Abuse Records has released

a new Aube CD, "Wired Trap," with five tracks totalling over 77 minutes of intense processed sounds all originally generated by a steel wire. Contact Self Abuse Records, 13 Academy St, Concord, NH 03301, U.S.A.

Alchemy Records' new "Good Alchemy Video" documents live performances from some of the biggest names in noise: Masonna, Incapacitants, Merzbow, Solmania, and Hijokaidan. Great footage of them all.

Magaibutsu Records has produced a suitably-weird and de-ranked video of the Ruins-Hatoba collaboration of the Ruins with Omoide Hatoba. Twenty-five tracks performed at La Mama in Tokyo on December 17, 1994. Be afraid, be very afraid.

Visual Shock of Switzerland are responsible for releasing CDs by many Japanese artists, including pop bands like Buck-Tick and By:Sexual as well as more interesting bands such as their new CD-EP by Def.Master, "The Fear of God." Pretty cool harsh industrial-rock stuff. Contact Visual Shock, P.O. Box 3244, 1401 Yverdon, Switzerland.



OMOIDE HATOBA

"THE LIVERS & GIGGERS - 1987 to 1993" (J094-3)

Yamamoto (BOREDOMS' guitarist), Chew (former BOREDOMS' drummer, present CONCRETE OCTOPUS, DESTROY 2) and Tsuyama (former UFO OR DIE bassist, present TAIRIKU OTOKO vs. SANMYAKU ONNA - meaning 'continental man vs. mountainrange woman'). Music seeking for something that most likely to exist but never does in reality. Rock-jazz-funk-psychedelic-hard-noise-blues-rap-unique-whatever, if you can categorize it. Yamamoto's sound live collage.



CHU ISHIKAWA

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Former ZEITLICH VERGELTER's leader CHU ISHIKAWA produced and recorded the music for ground-breeding cult film - "TETSUO - THE IRON MAN" & "TETSUO II - THE BODY HAMMER". This album is remixed from both films especially for CD. Powerful metal beat created by Ishikawa's handmade metal percussive instruments.

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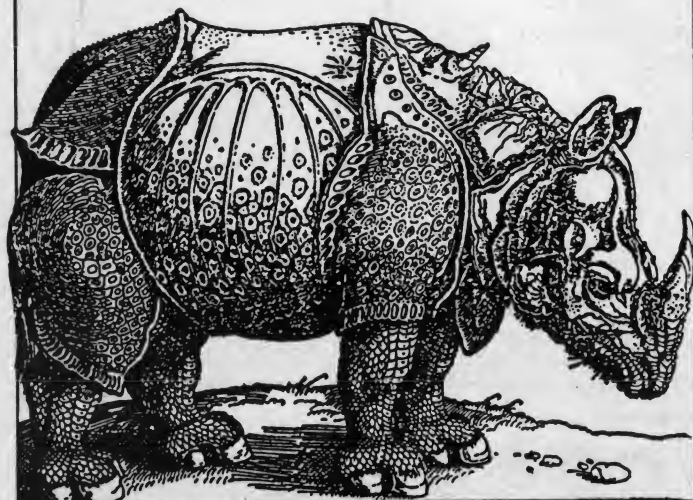
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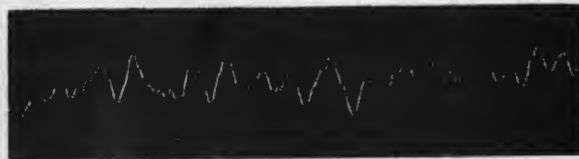
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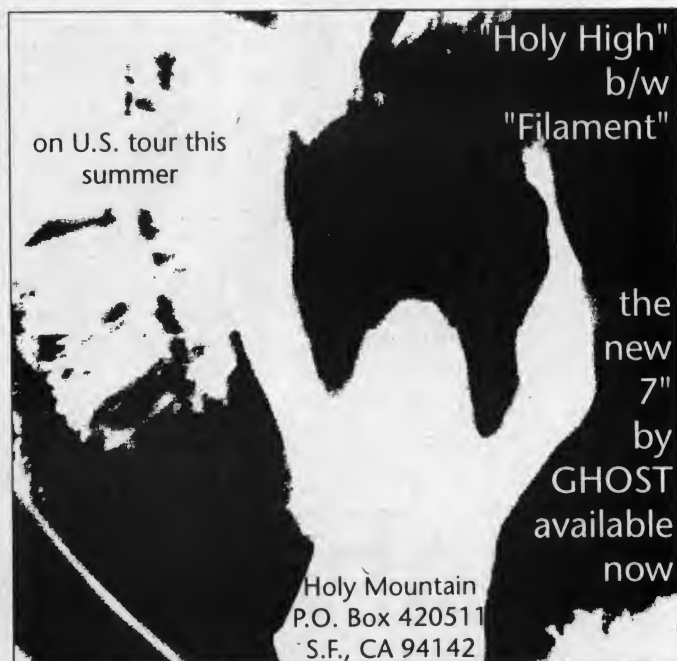
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Koji Tano, aka MSBR, has been making a name for himself in the noise realm (with partner Osako Takechi) for a few years now, but what's even more striking than his harsh sounds are his spectacular hand-made packages. Made in extremely limited editions, MSBR releases haven't been available to many people, which is a shame because the bizarre and unusual packages are something to see. Koji has also done some installations in Japan. Photos (which don't really do the works justice in the limited black & white print format we're limited to) of some of his works, and a list of releases, are here offered in an attempt to broaden his audience.

MSBR Records Releases:

- MR01 MSBR *Ultimate Ambience* LP
Ltd 400 copies, 100 are with handmade metallic jackets
- MR02 MSBR *Steroid* acetate 7"
Ltd 30 copies, with waxed collage booklet
- MR03 MSBR *Structured Suicide* C-60
With oiled newspaper package
- MR04 MSBR/Telepherique *Amalgam* acetate split 7"
Ltd 55 copies with object collage jacket
- MR05 MSBR/Taint *Scopotophilia* acetate split 7"
Ltd 66 copies with bent metal jacket
- MR06 Yasha Yasha C-46
MSBR/Third Organ collaboration in paper jacket
- MR07 MSBR/Smell & Quim *a cat has nine lives* acetate split 7"
Ltd 69 copies with handmade wood jacket
- MR08 MSBR/Daniel Menche *Multi-Layering Termination* split 7"

Contact:

Koji Tano
1-108 Anjoji
Matsuyama, Ehime 790
Japan

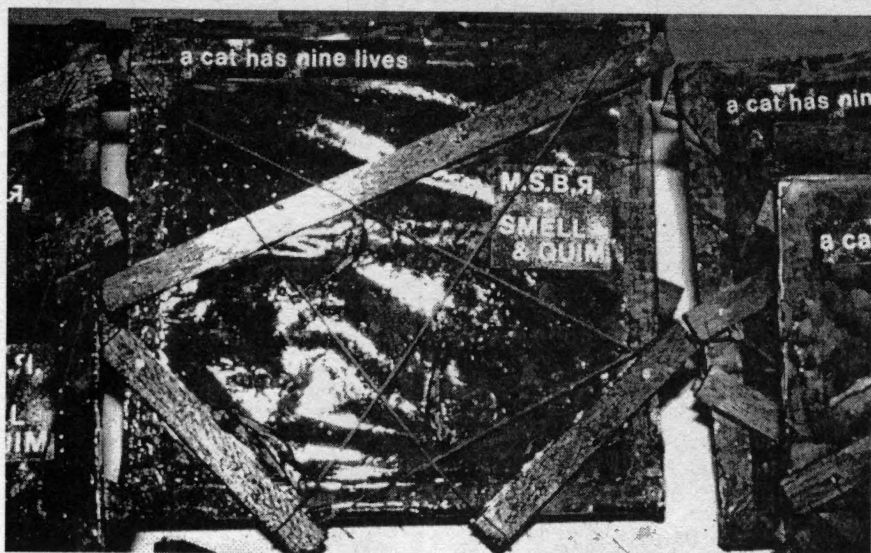


Jackets from MR04

M **S**



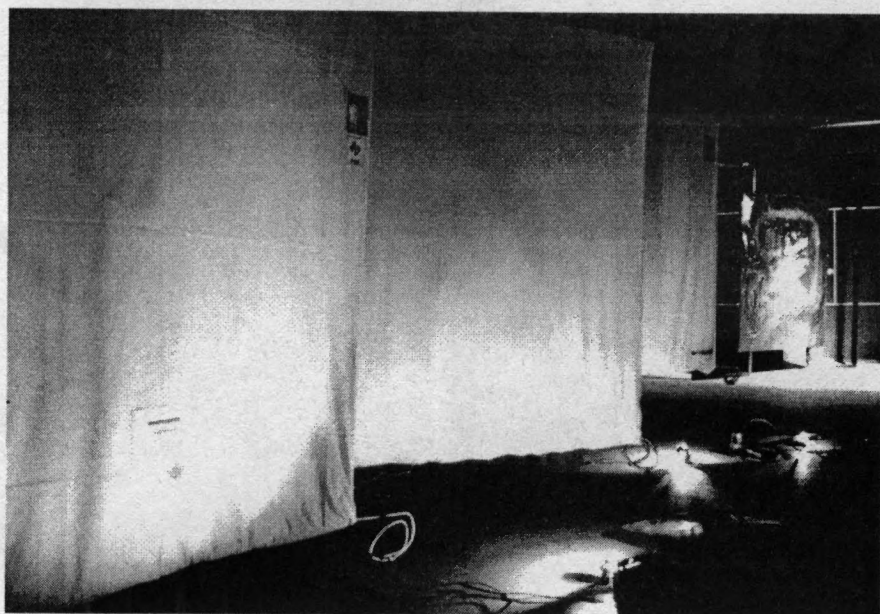
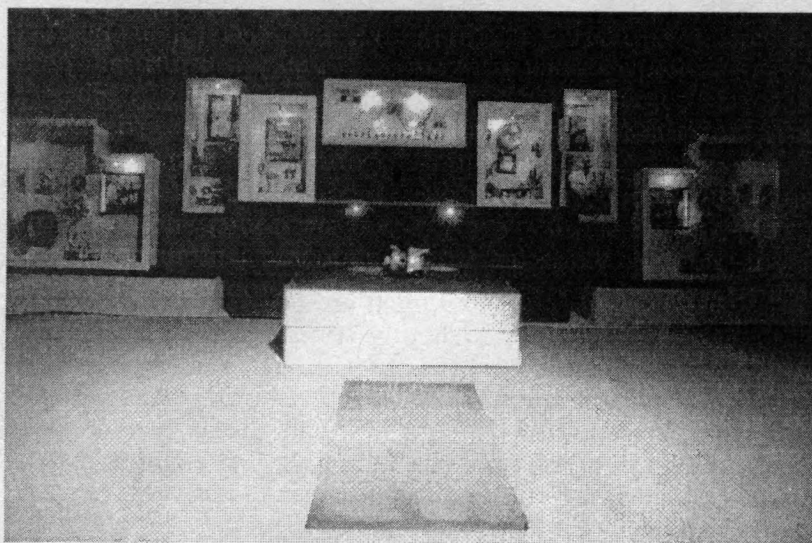
Booklets from MR02



Jackets from MR07

B **R**

Photos from MSBR installation



Guide to Japanese Pronunciation

The pronunciation of Japanese is generally straightforward, if it's spelled in a consistent way using the English alphabet. Syllables are always either vowels or consonant-vowel combinations; consonants cannot stand alone without a following vowel except for 'n'. In general, every letter is enunciated, with a few exceptions: syllables with a 'u' are often 'swallowed' instead of being clearly pronounced.

Vowels are pronounced as follows:

- a as in father, barber
- e as in pen, red
- i as in latrine
- o as in old, open
- u as in due, clue

Hence, Zeni Geva is pronounced "zeh-nee geh-vah," not "zeh-nee gee-vah," for example.

Vowels when combined are both pronounced fully, though blurred slightly. Thus a word like Tetsuo is pronounced "teh-tsu-oh" although the last two syllables are said smoothly together. Kuroyuri Shimai is "koo-roh-yu-ree she-mah-ee" with the last two syllables blending to make a sound like "eye." The 'she' syllable in Shimai is shorter than an English long 'e' sound.

The 'tsu' syllable above seems like a violation of the consonant-vowel combination rule, but in fact the 'ts' sound is considered a single consonant. That syllable is one which is often 'lost' since the 'u' is frequently nearly silent. Hence Boredoms member Eye Yamatsuka's name is pronounced "yah-mah-tsukah" instead of "yah-mah-tsoo-kah." The sound of the 'u' gets swallowed up.

Japanese doesn't really have either an 'r' or an 'l' sound, but something in-between. It is almost always written as an 'r' when words are spelled in English, but the pronunciation is with the tip of the tongue, midway between the two English sounds.

Likewise, although Zeni Geva is spelled with a 'v' it's actually more of a 'b' sound, again pronounced somewhere between the two.

wing.
ULTRA HARD
GEL

超強力なのに
ウルトラハードなセットカ

重に

来、

なる

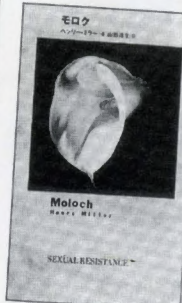
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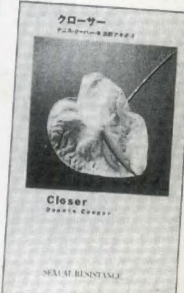


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SHIBUYA

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東京が好きな? 「うん、好きだよ。」
と、自分たちの「進歩」をうまく
代に残された宿題は、地球上の人
に自然かを選べといわれても困る。
ないと思う。いまさら東京をもと
い間か街クと
か自然かを選べといわれても困る。
ないと思う。いまさら東京をもと
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